

Spartan Retribution

by memorate

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Summary: What If: Spartan B-312 is not quite as dead as some might believe.. Be advised; I enjoy tips and criticism. Updated: 09/10

longest chapter yet, 6300 words.

1. Mission Accomplished

Chapther 1. Mission Complete.

August 30, 2552.

Ship breaking facility, AszÃ³d. Reach.

White light. Blinding white light. Heat. Distortion.

Pain.

Six coughed. He had completed his mission. Cortana had been delivered. Mankind's best hope of survival. An AI. He coughed again. He felt pain everywhere. The Brutes packed quite a punch.

He started walking towards the Onager cannon. Emile had been firing non-stop for at least an hour at the incoming horde of Covenant aircraft. Phantoms and Banshees and the crews within fell by the dozen. Bodies of Jackals and Brutes and marines littered the ground and stairs toward the platform. Without Emile, things might have worked out differently.

Careful not to alert any potential enemies Six used the shadows to his advantage. The shadows had always been his true element. His natural silence to his surroundings amplified it. A lone wolf stalking his prey. He did not see, nor hear anyone. He checked his radar often. He worked his way up the stairs picking up a MA5B Assault Rifle that lay to his right, covered in blood. He examined it and when he was satisfied he placed it on his magnetic strap on his shoulder. Slightly further lay a fragmentation grenade. He was

already wearing a sidearm, fixed on his right thigh. Other than that, he was carrying his extended combat knife. Usually the knife sported a 20 cm blade. Six had had it extended to at least 27 cm. The more blade, the more kill.

Emile had gone down fighting.

A Covenant cruiser had emerged as Six received Captain Keyes on the platform.

"Cruiser! Adjusting heading to the _Autumn_! Noble Four, I need firing on that cruiser or we're not getting out of here! Do you copy?" Captain Keyes shouted into his radio.

"I have your window, Sir." Emile responded with his harsh voice.

A phantom drop-ship emerged as Keyes' pelican-escort had begun turning towards the _Autumn_. It had opened fire immediately and hit the pelican sideways, bringing it crashing down a few feet from where Six was standing. Keyes' pelican began hovering, the pilot ready to leave. The phantom had hovered towards Emile's position and had unleashed Elites. One had landed next to the Onager seat, igniting its energy sword.

Emile let out a roar as he shot the Elite point blank, immediately dropping its energy shields, making the Elite fall to the ground by the sheer force of the impact. Emile got up and pumped another shot right into it as it lay down, killing it instantly.

He shouted "who's next?" right before being ambushed by another Elite, penetrated by an energy sword. Emile groaned. The elite lifted him off of the floor with its sword. Emile picked out his kukri knife, whipped around and pierced the knife into the Elite's neck while shouting "I'm ready! How about you?" The pair tumbled over and disappeared.

Six had watched the whole thing, analyzed and he knew what he had to do.

"Lieutenant! Get onboard! We gotta get the hell outta here!" A marine shouted stretching out his arm. Six stared at the hand, unwilling.

"Negative. I have the gun. Good luck Sir." He said in a calm, reassuring voice.

Keyes shook his head and turned down his eyes. 'Another Spartan lost. We need all of them', he thought.

"Good luck to you Spartan." He said. The voice was broken. The marines onboard the Pelican looked at each other. Mixed feelings. Awe and sorrow. The pelican drifted away as six started walking towards the Onager.

The rest is near history.

The sky had a crimson red color. The clouds were dark. The ground was dust. Where there had once been grass there was now molten metal, husks of vehicles and fire. It was hell. It is hell. Hundreds of kilometers away the Covenant cruisers were turning the world into

glass.

Six had made his way to the Onager. Two Elites lay dead, with Emile in the middle still holding his knife. His armor was pierced where the Elite had struck. His head tilted slightly to the left. Six reached down, put his hand on Emile's shoulder and took his time, grieving. After a few seconds he reached out and grabbed Emile's dog-tags. The least he could do. He now held Jorge's and Emile's. SPARTAN 052 and SPARTAN A-239.

He had accomplished his mission. He had nowhere to go. He was stranded. Alone. The last of Noble team.

Suddenly. He heard a Phantom hover near his position. He crouched down and took cover behind a barricade, sticking out his head to see. The phantom had landed 50 meters from his position, a couple of meters down. Six Grunts and seven Elites descended. 'Ultras and Zealots', he thought, as he noticed the Elites distinctive armor, armed with energy blades and plasma rifles.

He pondered the tactical advantage he had of the situation. He had the high ground. He had the moment of surprise. They would find him eventually. He knew that. They were too many. He checked his equipment, three full clips of ammo for the Assault rifle, one clip for the sidearm, and one grenade. Not enough. There were not enough time to spring a trap.

He felt something. A sudden cold in the back of his neck. Trouble. He had forgotten to check his radar. One red dot, directly behind him. He grabbed his knife faster than the eye could see and slashed while spinning around and saw a Jackal holding its throat with its vile hands. Purple blood was dripping on the floor. It squeaked and fell down, accidentally letting loose a barrage of carbine shots.

The Jackal must have sneaked around, searching for survivors to maim. They were well known for being carnivorous.

'Shit'.

He heard barks and squeals from the Elites and Grunts below him, no doubt they had seen the shots. The Elites pointed towards his position, giving orders to the Grunts. Immediately they started closing in on his position. Six turned around from the barricade and entered the ship yard complex, spotting some eager Grunts near him. He threw his grenade towards the foremost of the Grunts and saw it detonating, becoming dismembered. Its methane tank had started catching fire; it exploded, causing a chain reaction when the blast engulfed the tanks of the other Grunts. They all became dismembered and died. 'Not bad' he thought to himself.

The Elites were assessing the situation, having heard the explosions. Six took cover next to the port, pondering the situation. He calculated several different plans. He was not satisfied.

'To hell with it' he thought and stepped outside. He'd rather go out in with guns blazing rather than being hunted down.

He was the hunter, not them.

The Elites noticed him immediately, causing confusion. They opened

fire and his energy shields went down. His visor became cracked, and he dropped his rifle. He shook his head trying to get rid of the dizziness. His vision started to fail. He shook his head again. The Elites had stopped firing and started to encircle him. An eager Ultra started rushing towards him, firing. The armor took the brunt of it. Six picked up his assault rifle, firing. The Ultra went down. He noticed movement behind him. An Elite with an energy sword charged. Six produced an elbow to its face knocking it down, disabling its shields and shot it with his sidearm at point blank. There was incoming plasma fire to his side.

He dual wielded the rifle and sidearm shooting down two more Elites, while a third charged and knocked him down. The crash winded him and he landed two meters away, his assault rifle lying next to him. The Elite rushed and tried charging him with an energy dagger. Six produced his leg and kicked it away. Another Elite came up to his right with an energy sword. Six punched him and it became disoriented. The Elite he had kicked away charged again, jumping towards him with its dagger and struck, right next to his head. Had he not rolled round he would be impaled. Six made a backhand strike and it pummeled off. The Elite he had punched had come around, drawing its sword, pushing Six down.

'So this is it. This is how I die.. not bad.' He shut his eyes and braced himself.

He didn't feel pain. He didn't feel a thing, except.. confusion. He opened his eyes seeing a drawn energy sword and the Elite that was about to finish him off. He saw smoke. A long trail of it ending on the Elite's forehead. He then saw the hole in its head and the blood being produced from its mouth, a purple fluid dripping down on the dusty ground. He was, if possible, even more confused. And then it fell down whipping the dust on the ground to the air in circles.

His vision was blurring as the adrenaline started wearing off. That and his Spartan physique was the only thing that had kept him going for so long. A normal human would have fainted hours ago. Blood was running from his nose. He had cuts and scars and bruises all over his young face.

He thinks he is dying. A shadow appeared.

'_He dreamt. He dreamt he was a man being something more, an icon. He dreamt he was an icon being a man. He dreamt he had felt pain. He dreamt he had felt victory and defeat.'_

He awakened.

He saw an olive colored armored glove, its palm produced.

"Take it Spartan.." The voice said.

Six took a firm hold of the glove, helping himself up. His vision was not blurred anymore. His head still hurt, though. He set his eyes on the man the armored glove belonged to. Surprise and joy took hold of his facial features and he immediately produced a grin.

"Jun. Thank you" Six responded.

"I aim to please, Lieutenant. Get yourself together and follow me, I

have a pelican nearby". His voice was calm; slightly more than a whisper. No doubt an after-effect of, as designated sniper and scout, having to remain as stealthy as possible for his (almost) entire life. Six didn't complain about the plan. He had had enough of AszÃ³d for a lifetime.

Six bent down and picked up his assault rifle. 2 rounds left. He checked his surroundings. Seven Elites lay dead, spread out in a ring around where he and Jun were standing. His helmet lay behind him. He picked it up and examined the surface of it.

Dents and bruises were sharing the surface space of it. It had lost color a little here and there. The visor sported a nasty crack in the middle. He put it on.

He made a systems check on it. The radar was functional, showing himself as well as Jun, the latter being a yellow dot. His shield had started recharging and a blue bar at the top-center of it appeared. The helmet connected with his weapons and he saw two rounds clearly, indicating how much ammunition he had left. The grenade bar was empty, for now. Satisfied, he nodded towards Jun and they started making their way towards the Pelican.

"Where are the others?" Jun asked. They both sat in the cockpit of the pelican. Six shook his head.

"Didn't make it." Six answered. Jun didn't as much as flinch. Then he nodded.

"I thought you had left the planet by now. Is Dr. Halsey alive?" Six asked. He had been meaning to ask earlier.

"I completed the mission. Dr. Halsey is safe 3000 meters below a ONI complex, supposedly top-secret, in a complex called CASTLE base, which is the destination we're heading to in case you were wondering." Jun responded. Six had been meaning to ask where they were heading earlier as well.

"Acknowledged" Six responded. He turned his attention to the landscape of the doomed planet.

The sky had a distinctive red color. There were no clouds anymore, just smoke and fire. In the distance the Covenant fleets were reaching the final stage of their glassing. Pockets of grass remained here and there. Soon it would all be gone. All the green and blue and warmth of the world, along with the atmosphere. Six guessed that it would fade away and be gone in two weeks. At most.

Several kilometers away Six could see the Highlands Mountain range. Jun had told him that the top- secret facility resided within Menachite Mountain thanks to his enhanced vision and optical zoom from his visor. He could also see that the Covenant had deployed in the area. Hundreds of them. He noticed some banshees streaking around in the sky, at least fifty Wraiths and over one hundred Ghosts.

"This is going to get rough." Jun stated. Six glanced him.

"Evade them, head right and make a wide turn to the east side of the mountain." Six told him.

2. I've heard that before

Chapter 2. I've heard that before.

August 30, 2552

Outskirts of Menachite Mountain, Reach

Four Banshees had spotted the Pelican manned by the Spartans and had begun flying on an intercept course.

"They are splitting up, trying to hammer us from both sides!" Jun said with an almost unnatural calmness as he saw the Banshees splitting up in two groups, one group flying towards them while the other group circled around them.

>"Six, take the seat while I try to do some damage." The Pelican was fast, but it was no match against fighters like Banshees.<p>

"Affirmative. Hold steady" Six responded. Jun fumbled to the rear troop compartment, steadying himself on the seats where usually some marines would sit nervously awaiting unloading. Six changed seats and familiarized himself with the controls. He brought up the targeting HUD for the standard issue 40cal that almost every Pelican was equipped with. Some Pelicans sported the larger 70cal machine guns and missile pods but seeing as this was a non-frontier drop-ship, the former occupants of the vehicle had decided to keep a lighter weight and had probably sent the heavy weapons to the frontline.

Near the loading hatch of the Pelican was a red lever. Below was a sign that stated: 'Danger. Do not pull in flight.' Jun pulled the lever. Instantly the wind began sucking out the few loose things in the troop compartment. Jun activated his magnetic soles on his boots and grabbed his SRS99C-S2 AM Sniper Rifle. He performed a weapons check, and satisfied, he aimed for the foremost Banshee that had flown behind the Pelican.

The Banshee opened fire. It missed a large portion of the plasma bolts, but a few found home. The armor instantly melted where it had been struck.

"Six, evasive maneuver!" Jun shouted while still aiming down the scope.

"Roger, hold steady!" Six flew to the right and the left, trying to disorient the Banshee as much as possible. The Banshee was more agile than the Pelican though and it was keeping up with every maneuver Six performed.

Jun took a deep breath. He zoomed in with the scope. He exhaled, and fired. The anti-armor round instantly hit the right wing of the Banshee and it fell, spinning downwards, out of control. The pilot of the second Banshee was skilled, however. He instantly made a wide turn to the right, followed by a horizontal loop so that the right side of the Pelican was dead-on in his sights. The Banshee opened fire and struck the Pelicans' right wing. The wing jerked and blew off, draining the fuel reserves in the wing.

"We're going down, Jun! Shut the hatch!" Six shouted into his teamcom. Jun pulled the lever as hard as he could, shutting the hatch halfway. He tried again, but it wouldn't bulge. Jun made one final effort, and accidentally ripped the lever off the wall. He stared at it as it lay in his hand.

"Six, we've got a problem" Jun said as he stood in the cockpit, showing Six the ripped off lever. The Banshee had pulled off, satisfied with the kill. Six looked up at Jun and spotted the lever in his hand.

"That complicates things." He stated.

Six tried to steady the Pelican as much as he could, but just having one wing on the bird made it a near impossibility to control it. The fuel had ignited and fire had erupted, streaking the right side of the Pelican with flames. Within seconds the fire had reached the interior of the troop compartment. Six pressed a button on the control panel next to his seat and the doors shut immediately, separating the compartment with the cockpit effectively. Jun climbed into the co-pilot seat holding on to whatever he could grab.

"I will try to steer down towards the canyon 2 clicks ahead. It's our best bet for making it out of this flying trashcan alive. Braze for impact." Six said. Jun nodded. "If we don't make it, it's been an honor." Six looked at Jun's golden visor.

"Likewise" Jun said.

Six evaded cliff walls and pillars, flying over and under rocks. He couldn't evade them all, though. Not even the best pilot could. He knew this. And he was certainly one of the best. Much thanks to his augmented reflexes.

The Pelican was losing altitude fast and flames and black smoke streaked the rocks as it swept by. It hit a giant pillar with the left wing, shattering it and the now not so bird like aircraft was rapidly reaching solid ground. When there was only some hundred meters left between the Pelican and the rocky ground Jun shouted:

>"Lock your armor Spartan!"<p>

Funny.

He had heard that before.

And then there was a crash, and then there was nothing.

*Authors note* This was a short chapter I know, but it's full of action. Sorry for the delay of updating, but I have a load of work to do and it requires me to travel around to hotels and I usually don't bring my computer. Perhaps I should bring it so that I can write more frequently. One reason for the delay, other than the travelling thing, is that I have no idea where I want my story to go. So I will draw up a mind map and hopefully it will help.

_I have also noticed several flaws in my style of writing, and I edit and edit and it get's slightly better all the time. Hopefully it will improve as the story goes on. For now, it's going quite fast and all the events are happening at once. Do you like that, or should I make

them more.. tedious?_

3. What would you say if I

*DISCLAIMER* Halo belongs to Bungie, not me!

Chapter 3. What would you say if..

September 7, 2537

Refugee Camp, New Harmony

The ground was littered with mud. It had rained nonstop for over a week. The green tents were lined up in even rows, spanning several hundreds of meters. There were people everywhere. Some of them were sick and would surely not make it to the end of the week, while others were stronger and did the best they could of their current situation. The UNSC needed people like that. But it was not them he had been sent to evaluate.

Anderson brought up his notepad. On it was information regarding children. Boys and girls no more than six years old. The long list was almost finished. One little boy remained, however. Anderson had high hopes of this one.

The boy had lived with his family â€" a mother, a father and a sister, on Troy, one of three colonies in the Hellespont system. Troy and Harmony had been glassed, and only New Harmony remained. From what Anderson could tell, only the boy had made it.

The boy's history wasn't the only reason Anderson had high hopes for him. Yes, revenge and hate could be utilized as a very efficient tool, considering the right circumstances. No, out of all the children he had been tasked to extract, not one of the other kids had such a high scoring on the genetic markers that Dr. Halsey had pinpointed and utilized decades back. The boy had scored 9.2/10 in genetic compability. That was extraordinary considering that 10/10 was widely regarded to be a 'perfect' human. It was also extraordinary considering that the minimum genetic marking in order to survive the updated augmenting process would have to be a 6.8/10. If the boy had been born earlier, he could have been conscripted to the SPARTAN II program.

Anderson wasn't happy with his job. He never thought he would be a 'recruiter' when he graduated from the Naval Academy. The difference between him and many others, though, is that he accepts who he is. He knows that one cannot pick and choose. Not in times like these. He knew that everyone needed to do their part in order to even have a hope of surviving the Covenant Onslaught. He knew that he was serving mankind, much more so than others.

The food line was ever growing. Hundreds of people stood there with green ponchos and metal jars in hand, eager for food. Anderson felt ashamed that he could enjoy three good meals a day while these people, if they were lucky, could eat one. One little girl had just received a piece of bread and some soup. She was very happy. Anderson could tell. Sadly, the ground was wet and she slipped, dropping her food in the mud. She started to cry. Anderson was on his way to help her up, but a boy had reached her before him. He towered before her

as she sat in the mud, crying. Anderson could not see his face as he had pulled up his hood. The boy was tall, he noticed. He stretched out his right arm and in his hand laid a piece of bread. The girl looked up in astonishment. She quickly took the piece of bread, said 'thank you' and ran away. Anderson had seen the entire scene and he didn't know what to make out of it. The boy turned away and made his way to a log, and then he sat down eagerly eating his soup. Anderson walked to him.

"That was a mighty fine thing you did. Not many other people would do that." Anderson said. The boy looked up and Anderson could clearly see his facial features. Anderson gasped. It was the boy he had been tasked to retrieve. The boy didn't say anything. He showed no emotion what so ever. It didn't look as if he would speak, either.

"What's your name?" Anderson asked. The boy didn't answer. Anderson already knew the name. He merely tried to break the ice, make the boy open up. Asking for ones name is usually the question to manipulation and acceptance. That is what he had been taught. "Not very talkative, huh?" He added.

"Where's your family?" He asked, already knowing the answer. "Gone" The boy answered. The boy didn't show any sign of emotion.

"My family is gone as well. The Covenant killed them." It wasn't necessarily a lie. The Covenant had killed his brother and sister when they attacked Harvest. His wife and kids were alive and well on Earth, however. "They killed my family too." The boy said. _'Finally, something in common._' He thought.

"I'm sorry" Anderson said. The boy simply nodded. Anderson thought of a question he could ask, that would make the boy accept to his proposition. Or rather, ONI's proposition. "What would you do if the Covenant got here?" Anderson asked. The boy looked at his feet, and then his hands. He made a fist. The boy looked up with his hazel eyes, looking straight into Anderson's. Finally, he said: "I would kill them all". Anderson smiled inside. _'Got him'_ . The next minutes, Anderson explained to the boy exactly how he could extract his revenge on the aliens. Every last one of them.

Pelican dropship

September 15, 2537

Onyx

The boy stared out of the window of the Pelican onto the ground below. There were forest and jungle and rivers everywhere. The planet he came from had been littered with grass and mountains and farmland and cities. None of it was here. He didn't know what the planet was named. None of the soldiers and men in black suits had told him. They mostly told him to shut up. The boy liked to think he was a quiet one.

'_Not quiet enough for them'_ _he thought.

The pelican was packed of children. The boy could only see two adults. Two adults and nineteen children, excluding himself. He was proud that he could count to at least one hundred. Not many of his friends could do that. He sighed and suddenly became sad. His friends

weren't alive anymore. Not that he knew of. The boy looked out of the window again. He could clearly see four other Pelicans. He didn't know if there were more besides that, and he didn't know if they too were packed with children. He wondered if they were kids like him, orphans. Survivors of the Covenant.

Since the day in the refugee camp where he had met the man, Anderson, he had frequently travelled around. He had spent his time on different ships, not knowing where he was headed. He saw other kids, but he didn't try to talk to them. They had received little food and he was tired, but somehow unable to sleep. He didn't know the date, nor did he know what he was supposed to do when they reached their destination. He only knew that the man had promised him he could kill the Covenant. Kill them all. He had received several tests. Written ones and logical ones, as well as DNA tests and blood tests. Thankfully it seemed like the tests would be over now.

"Touchdown in fifteen seconds!" The pilot shouted. "Roger" one of the two men responded. "Alright kids, this is what will happen. When the hatch opens you will hear a command. As soon as you hear it, you will comply and exit the compartment nice and orderly. No running, no shouting and no god damn crying! Failure to comply will result in.." The man produced a baton. He clicked a button and blue electricity sparked from the top of it. "well, I don't think you'll enjoy it." The man smiled. The boy didn't like that smile. And he would not want to get zapped. He would comply. _'Whatever that means.' _

"Touchdown!" The pilot shouted. The hatch opened. A voice roared.

"Recruits! Fall out!" No one moved.

"Alright you maggots! Go!" The man with the baton and wicked smile said. The boy was foremost in line and he walked as orderly as he could thinking that he will ****not**** get zapped. The other kids, however, did not walk. They ran and went wild.

Sunlight temporarily blinded him, but he kept walking. The man had told him to walk, so walk he did. When his vision returned to normal he looked around and he was amazed.

There were hundreds of other kids. He couldn't even count how many there were. Some meters before him stood an enormous giant in green armor. On his head was a golden visor. To his right stood a man with evil eyes and harsh facial features. He looked as if he could kill them all without even trying. The boy could clearly see his nametag on his chest and it read: 'SCPO F. Mendez'. Suddenly he heard a loud rumbling. All the children ceased what they were doing and turned towards the green giant. It started talking.

"Attention recruits! I am Lieutenant Commander Ambrose. You have all endured great hardships to be here. I know each and everyone of you has lost you loved ones on Jericho VII, Harvest, Harmony, Biko and Troy. The Covenant has made orphans of you all.

The boy noticed that several of the kids got tears in their eyes. He understood them. He, however, stared at the giant with hatred in his eyes.

"I am going to give you a chance to learn how to fight, a chance to become the best soldiers in the UNSC, a chance to destroy the Covenant" The boy liked that. The giant continued. "I am going to give you a chance to become like me: A Spartan."

"We cannot accept everyone though." The giant continued. "There are five hundred of you. We have three hundred training slots. So as of tonight, Senior Chief Petty Officer Mendez" He pointed to the man on his right "has devised a way to truly separate those who want it from those who do not. Chief?"

The man called Mendez opened his mouth. His voice sounded like a roar. "You want to be Spartans? Then get back on those ships!" The boy was shocked and confused. "No? I guess we found a few washouts. You!" He pointed to a boy on the far right. "You. And you." He pointed at the boy. "No? Then get on those Pelicans!" The boy turned and ran towards the ship he had come with.

When all twenty kids had boarded the Pelican, they had been given a backpack which had a red handle attached to its side. The boy wondered what it's for. After what seemed like an eternity, the Pelican came to a stop and hovered in the air. The boy was even more confused by now. "Put the backpacks on and report any loose ends." One of the men in the back had said. The boy put it on and it fitted perfectly. "Everybody have them on? Raise one hand if you do." The man asked. Everybody raised their hand. "Good" he added. The hatch opened and several kids instinctively took a step back. They were several hundreds of meters above ground and all they could see was tree tops. "You will now jump out of the Pelican, and when you are in the air you will count to ten and then pull the red handle of your backpack." The man said. "First one. Go!" He shouted towards the one nearest the hatch. The girl looked confused and frightened. "Anyone not jumping will be a washout!" The boy had been frightened as well, but when he heard those words, his hate won over his fear. He would not be a washout. The girl seemed to have thought the same. She jumped. And one after the other they all jumped out. Only the boy remained. And then he took a step and fell towards the pitch black sky and the tree tops. The boy knew he had taken one step further to his path of revenge. He would be strong and he would be good. And one day, he would get them all.

Authors Note Well, a backstory was inevitable. I won't focus that much on training and such. You'll notice that I've borrowed the last part of the story from Ghosts of Onyx, since, well, the novel explains how the first day in Camp Currahee was formed. This chapter was quite easy to write actually. Much easier than action packed ones. Maybe I'll mix it up with more of these, if you find it interesting?

4. Spartans always says hello with a bang

Chapter 4. Spartans always say hello with a bang

August 30, 2552

Menachite Mountain, Reach

"Finally awake, huh?" A voice said. Six groaned. He looked up to see where the voice was coming from. Jun sat on a rock, cleaning his

rifle. He placed two of his fingers on his visor and made a Spartan smile.

Six recalled what had happened. The Banshee had hammered the Pelican with plasma bolts, tearing off a wing. Fuel had leaked out of the wing. All systems had gone to alert. Six had tried to balance the Pelican as much as he could, but the friction had been too great and they had gone down. Luckily, Six had reached the small clearing in between some of the large rocks which littered the slopes of the mountain.

The Pelican laid in pieces around them. A scorched husk now remained of the steel-gray aircraft. Sparks were flickering from the exposed wires and the interior had been thrown in complete disarray. _'Guess we won't be flying our way out of here' _he thought. Six recalled that he and Jun would have shared the Pelicans fate if they hadn't activated the armor-lock.

The armor lock was a relatively new addition to the MJOLNIR Mk. V armor. It had been issued to Noble team while on Reach as a prototype, and luckily, it had functioned perfectly. The armor-lock, once activated, effectively locks and seals the joints of the armor, making it impossible to move the limbs, or being moved, for that matter. It decreases the energy output to all systems, while boosting the shields. Theoretically, the shields should be able to withstand a mortar from a Wraith tank. Six did not want to try that, though.

This was the second time the function had saved his life. Six deactivated the armor-lock and stood up, checking his equipment. His rifle had not been as lucky as his armor. The assault rifle had bent in an unnatural shape. It resembled something like a crescent moon, only more gray and dirty. Six threw it away. Everything else seemed to be in working order. He was dangerously low on ammunition for his sidearm, though.

"How long was I out?" Six asked.

"No more than two hours." Jun responded. "I've scouted the terrain ahead." He added. "There's sign of Covenant activity in our immediate vicinity. They must have seen us go down. I expect scouting patrols. We can't evade them." Six agreed. He had seen it many times before. A Pelican or falcon or hornet crashing, being chased by a patrol fixed on taking out the survivors.

"What's our next move?" Six asked.

"Let's give them a Spartan welcome." Jun said. Six responded with a Spartan smile.

They had taken position one hundred meters from the crash. They had carefully selected a tight corridor in a small pass. Small boulders lay everywhere, not even big enough for the average Grunt to cover behind. The enemy would have no way to flank them and due to the width of the corridor, only a few of them would be able to return fire at the same time. They did not have any plans for the enemy to return fire, however. Jun had climbed a large rock, overlooking the entire mountain pass. Due to the natural shape of the rock, the enemy wouldn't be able to get a fix on his position, much less fire at him. He, however, were in complete domination. Jun had unholstered his

sniper rifle from his magnetic clap on his back and was lying in wait, ready to report the inevitable enemy activity.

Meanwhile, Six had taken position behind a narrow curve not more than one meter in width, his back tightly pressed against the wall. Knowing the enemy, they would try to charge forward and get behind them. There's where Six came in. He did not have any weapons suited for long range combat, so he would have to try and get in close and personal. In his right hand he held his combat knife, and in his left he had his pistol. He waited for Jun to report any activity.

Six heard the crackling of the teamcom.

"Six. Be advised, I've got one medium sized enemy patrol 75 meters due south moving towards our position. Two of those large ape things, six of.. no, make that seven. Seven Grunts and two Jackals. Get ready for my mark, over." Jun reported.

"Acknowledged. Standing by, out." Six responded. He could hear them. The high pitched voices of the Grunts and the barks of those.. Brutes. He had not met Brutes before arriving on Reach. They were vicious and ruthless, standing a full three heads taller than Six, often prone to charging blinded by rage. They were often covered in strong armor, already complimenting their tough skin. They were not to be underestimated. This had just become more difficult. "Jun, target the Brutes first. That will throw them into disarray, over." Six advised. "What do you mean with Brutes..? Ah, I see, good one. Roger, out." Jun responded.

"Six, be advised, the enemy is 45 meters from your position, distance closing fast, over." Six could hear the footsteps. Four heavy ones and a dozen lighter ones. The lighter ones were in the lead. _'Good.'_ "Acknowledged. Out". He waited.

"Six, 15 meters. Make ready." Six crouched down, raising his knife above his head.

"5 meters, taking the shot" Jun said. Immediately Six could hear two loud cracks echoing in the corridor, followed by high pitched squeals and animalistic cries of pain. "Mark! Go, go, go!" Jun shouted, followed by another crack from his rifle. Six sprinted from cover and immediately pierced the neck of a Grunt, who had it's back towards him. Six absorbed the scene before him. Shockingly, one Brute was still standing, even though half of it's face was a bloody mess. Both Jackals were down, one of them lying crushed under the dead Brute. The Grunts were in complete disarray. Six produced his pistol and fired. Three Grunts hit the ground. He charged, piercing the head of one Grunt with his knife while spinning around, kicking another one in the neck. He could hear bones break, as it fell. He heard one more loud crack, and the head of the last Grunt standing disconnected from it's body. The Brute let out an angry cry and charged him blinded with rage. Six pulled the knife out of the skull of the dead Grunt and readied himself with a combat stance, holding his knife in a reversed grip. Just as they were about to connect, Six ducked and brought up his knife, piercing the throat of the Brute. It tried to pull it away, but fell and whipped whirls of dust into the air. Six recovered his knife and wiped the blade.

"Nice one" Jun said. "I'm coming down."

"I'll sweep the area, make sure nothing is still alive." Six responded. Nothing moved. Jun leapt from rock to rock, and a few seconds later, they were standing next to each other, overlooking the scene.

"Emile would have loved this." Jun said. Six nodded. _'Yes.. he would_.' He thought. The rumbling and crashes of the Covenant army echoed into the mountain pass. Six and Jun stared down the slope, overlooking the army gathered at the foot of the mountain. The sound from the plasma barrage was deafening. The two of them began walking.

Night had arrived. It provided the Spartans with much needed camouflage. The Covenant had probably noticed the delay of their patrol, and was more alert for enemy activity. Surprisingly, the Spartans had not encountered more foot patrols. No doubt they wished to save their troops for the attack on CASTLE. Banshee's, however, streaked the air. Patrolling and searching in every crack of the mountain. Six and Jun had evaded them so far, but did not know how much longer they would be able to continue to proceed unnoticed. They decided to take a break for the night and continue tomorrow. They found a large rock leaning against another, and in between it provided perfect cover. They crawled in. They barely fit with their armor, but they were safe. Relatively.

September 1

Reach

Six woke up. He felt strangely relaxed and well rested. He checked his HUD. _'September 1? I've slept for two days.'_ He said to himself. He patted Jun on his shoulder. "Wake up!" Six said to him. "We've waited here too long. We need to move out!" Jun raised himself as much as he could.

"Shit, first of September? I don't even remember the last time I slept that long." Jun said with a voice full of surprise. He then turned his head, looking down the slope. "Hey, listen." He said.

"I don't hear anything." Six said. "Exactly." Jun told him. Then Six figured it out. He rose with caution and looked down the slope. The Covenant army wasn't barraging the mountain. The Banshee's didn't streak the air. There were no Covenant army. "Either they have left, or they have breached the mountain." Jun said. Six was thinking in the same line. If they had breached the mountain, survival chances for Dr. Halsey had decreased drastically. Six unholstered his pistol, loaded it, and then lowered it. He turned to Jun and said:

"Move out".

They sprinted down the mountain slope. They were only a few kilometers from the site where the Covenant had hammered the mountain wall with plasma barrages. They were concerned for Dr. Halsey and all the other personnel that remained inside CASTLE. They had taken an oath to protect humanity. And that's what they were going to do. And if that meant they had to fight their way through an army of the Covenant, inside a mountain, and with a low chance of survivability, then it was what they were going to do. They were Spartans, and Spartans were designed to accomplish the impossible.

They moved with caution the last hundred meters, often stopping and listening, and when they were satisfied no enemy was near, they continued. The field ahead of them was empty. Black smoke was reaching for the sky from the mountain. Burnt grass and scorched earth stuck up everywhere. They had reached the large gaping hole the Covenant had tried so hard to create. Six moved up to the wall, standing next to the side of the large opening, pistol ready. Jun stood next to him. Six nodded to him. Six peeked inside. Wraith tanks and Banshee's stood abandoned. There were no foot soldiers in sight. The corridor was twenty meters wide, stretching it's way inside the mountain. There were no adjacent corridors or doors, only concrete walls and a dusty ground. The lights in the ceiling was flickering. Six was surprised to see that there still was electricity in the complex.

Six pulled his hand up and gestured for Jun to follow. Six took point and they went inside. They moved stealthily, sticking near the wall as much as possible. Six wondered why the Covenant had abandoned their vehicles. In a matter of minutes they had reached the end of the corridor. There was a narrow lift standing there. It's walls was covered with a fence and some lights. In the middle of it stood a control panel. They stepped onto the platform and looked down. There was only darkness.

"Well, there's only one way away from here." Six said as he activated the control panel on the lift. Immediately the lift responded and it sunk down into the darkness. It reminded Six of the lift ride beneath SWORD base. Only then they had Carter and Emile with them. They could use their help now.

Six looked onto the control panel. The numbers indicating the depth they were travelling to was growing rapidly. In a matter of minutes they had reached almost 3000 meters. "Get ready" Jun told him. He didn't need to tell him. He was as ready as he'd ever be. The lift reached it's destination. Six opened the gate and moved to cover. There were no enemies near. Jun immediately followed.

The complex was huge. Several concrete buildings reinforced with titanium-A littered the ground, and there were large hills of ice and rock everywhere. In the distance there was a large structure that clearly was alien in origin. It was shaped like a pyramid, silver and steel colored. Blue flicks of light and strange hieroglyphs protruded from it's facade. It looked almost overly decorative and simple at the same time. The Covenant nor humanity would be able to build such a structure.

"It looks like that building we fought next to beneath SWORD base." Six remarked. "Only, this one seems larger."

"Whatever it is, the Covvies seem interested." Jun said as he pointed to a building near the alien structure. The Covenant troops were grouped en masse just outside. Six noticed that there were no Elites nearby. There only seemed to be Brutes and Jackals and Grunts, and a few Hunter pairs. They didn't seem to have breached the building yet. No doubt they didn't wish to strike the alien structure. There were several groups patrolling the area.

"You think that Dr. Halsey is in there somewhere?" Six asked as he pointed towards the structure.

"Your guess is as good as mine." Jun answered. "We need to get past those patrols." He added.

"Let's search the buildings and see if we can find anything useful." Six suggested. Jun nodded and gestured for Six to take point. And so he did.

Six and Jun stood outside of one of the larger buildings. There was a sign that stated "Experimental facility B-01". This bound to be good. They entered. Six searched the first room straight out of text book. He had done this thousands of times before. The first room seemed to be a reception area. Six checked his radar. No friendlies and no enemies. He examined his surroundings. A desk had been tossed aside and paper littered the ground. There were blood splashes on one of the walls but no body. He saw a keycard near the desk, lying on the floor. He picked it up. _'This might be useful' _He told himself. He gestured to Jun that the room was clear, and they continued further into the building. There was the same scene everywhere. Blood splashes, tossed aside furniture and equipment. No bodies, however. Six made a thorough sweep. He didn't like the idea of something, anything, hiding, ready to deal a fatal blow to him. His radar suggested the only ones inside was him and Jun. As they approached the final room of the building, they saw a heavily secured gate. Above there was a sign that stated: "Prototypes and Experimental designs". Six liked the sound of that. They used the keycard, and immediately the door popped open. Six stood still for two full seconds.

"What is it?" Jun asked. Six looked at him.

"I think you better take a look at this." He said, and gestured a spartan smile.

*AUTHORS NOTE* This took me a few days to write, and it was a pain in the ass. Mostly the inspirational business. I take a few liberties with my writing as far as the story intermingles with the official ones. Hope you don't mind. People might think they see where this is going, but you're in for a treat. Mostly because I've read so few books, I'll have to use my own fantasy. And who knows where that will lead us? I am really trying to do my homework on the Halo universe, but in this particular time(the fall of reach) is hard.

_Oh, and __**please review**__. I have no idea if what I'm writing is shit or not. This story has had ~650 views and only two reviews(thank you for those two!), which, might I suggest, is a poor read/review ratio._

And as you might have found out, you won't find any CAPITAL LETTER DIALOUGE AND EMOTION OUTBURTS and stuff like that. I find those things annoying and I doubt Spartans would really yell out their emotions and such at people. At least not dead serious guys as Jun and Six.

5. Crystal clear

*DISCLAIMER* The halo universe belongs to microsoft, Bungie and 343 studios. I think.

Chapter 5. Is it clear? Crystal.

September 1.

CASTLE base, Reach

"Jackpot" Jun said. They entered the room. The room was massive. There were two walkways with tables in the middle and weapon racks covered the walls, some designs which Six and Jun had never seen before. In the middle of the floor, on the tables, lay odd looking devices. They couldn't tell what the devices would do when activated without further inspection. Six started walking down the right path of the two walkways. He read the information labels beneath the weapon racks, while overlooking the tables in the middle. He didn't find anything useful. Most weapons were in a half-finished state, and the information labels on some of the devices didn't promise much. He suddenly stopped. An odd looking object lay on one of the tables. It was shaped like a grenade, only colored in steel gray with bright lines decorating it. He read the label beneath the object. It said:

_ 'Bubble Shield' _

_ 'Bubble shield?' _ he thought. He continued reading.

_ 'Anti-artillery and personal defense generator. When the generator comes into contact with any surface, given enough force, will create a highly resistant dome shaped shield, capable of withstanding extreme amounts of bombardment. Slow moving objects is able to pass through the protective dome. The dome lasts for 20 seconds.' _

_ 'This might come in handy.' _ He told himself. He picked up the device and placed it in a compartment on his right thigh. He continued onward through the room.

"Jun, found anything?" Six asked. "Nada" was the response. "Wait, found something". Jun bent down and picked up an object. "The label reads 'Flare'. Supposedly it will temporarily blind anyone looking towards the direction it has been thrown or placed. Want me to grab it?" Jun asked. "Do it" Six responded.

They didn't find much more useful weapons or devices. Most of the weapons were unfinished or had flaws which the scientists had been unable to fix. These flaws would, maybe, prove fatal to either one of them if said weapon was be used in a combat situation. They instead opted to use their own equipment which they knew by heart. Some things however, inside that room, had proved to be satisfactory. The bubble shield would certainly come in handy in a combat situation, and the flare would provide an excellent distraction. They had also found a large amount of much needed ammunition, both standard issue and experimental rounds. Six was satisfied. But, at the same time he was saddened. They hadn't found anyone else alive or dead. The bodies were gone, leaving only blood stains. The odds for Dr. Halsey did not look good. Six hadn't given up on her yet, though. Not on himself either. He needed to get off of Reach, and he needed her to do it. Not that he thought she had a secret starship hidden inside of CASTLE. No, more that she would have a plan. Six had gotten the impression that she was one of the kinds of people who had back-up plans.

They had made their way towards the reception area and were discussing their next step.

"I think our best bet is inside that alien complex. Dr. Halsey is bound to be in there somewhere. Alive, hopefully" Six said. "Especially since the Covenant doesn't seem to be able to get in."

"Agreed. We need a plan on how to get over there first. Without alerting the enemy." Jun added. "I suggest we try our new toys." They continued discussing. Finally, Six stood up. He checked his equipment while Jun did the same. "You know what to do?" he asked. Jun immediately answered "Yes." '_Good' _he thought and exited the building.

They had sneaked their way outside and had climbed a large rock, covered in ice and snow. They lay down and tried to be as invisible as possible. It wasn't easy. The dark gray and olive colored suits did not blend well with the terrain. The Covenant had not detected them yet, though. Six guessed they were too arrogant to suspect humans being able to ambush them, or even get as near them as the two of them had. They heard large poundings as metal beat on metal. The Covenant had not been successful in breaching the building. But for every moment the two of them lingered, the enemy got closer. The Brutes looked eager.

"Remember, we are not to engage the enemy unless we are fired upon. There is nothing we can do for the civilians inside." Jun reminded Six. "You okay, Six?" He asked.

Six sighed and accepted the situation. He did not like it, however. The Covenant had killed too many. "Yeah.. yeah, I'm alright. Let's do this. Throw it." Six said. Jun waited for a few moments before he threw the flare. He wanted to time it just right. Then, an opportunity presented itself and he threw it. The flare streaked the air, landing nearly sixty meters away, right between Six and Jun and the alien complex. The flare immediately erupted and a bright white light illuminated the area. Roars and shrieks from the Covenant erupted and the Grunts ran around, panicked. Six was completely blinded. He tinted his visor immediately, but it didn't help. The damage was done. Luckily, he had memorized the terrain. He hoped Jun had done the same. He made a leap from the rock and landed twenty five meters below. He heard a thud behind him, and he knew Jun was with him. And then he sprinted. Spartan III's, on average, could reach speeds around 50 km/h. Six however, was capable of reaching nearly 60 km/h and continue with that speed for two hours, unarmored. When he sprinted such a short distance as 100 meters, he could reach 81 km/h. It put an immense strain on his Achilles tendons, and therefore he did not do so often. When he was wearing his armor, the speed amplified to around 100 km/h. Six had been told that he was almost on par with the fastest Spartan II, Kelly-087. He had also been told that Spartan III's had a possible potential to only increase in speed, durability and strength as they grew older. A somewhat positive side-effect from the augmentations, as a doctor had said in the briefing before the procedures. His former Commander, Carter A-249 was the oldest Spartan III alive during the Reach campaign. And he had the strength and speed to prove it. He was almost on par with Jorge.

Jun was lagging behind slightly. Six' vision had began returning to

normal. Some of the Covenants' as well, it seemed, as they had begun opening fire on him. It was mostly stray rounds, but some hit home and in turn got absorbed by his energy shields. He saw a door opposite of him, in the middle of the alien complex. He picked up his speed. He hoped the door would open. They had come too far to be beaten by a non functioning door. He closed the last distance and reached it. It opened immediately. The Covenant looked dazed, confused. Six used the confusion by taking cover near the door and open fire on the enemy, as Jun was still running. Six shot the head off of a Grunt and hit a Brute in its rifle-arm. The alien dropped its rifle, gripping the hand in pain. Six opened fire once again and decimated three Grunts and one of the Jackals who had been too slow to activate it's shield. One Brute barked an order to the army and they began charging Six's position, just as Jun had reached him. Six lobbed a grenade before running inside. The doors shut behind them. He heard a bang and loud screams. Six turned around and saw Brutes being denied entrance. He was confused by this, but at the same time, relieved. They had accomplished something impossible. Again.

Six and Jun made thorough sweeps as they searched through the complex. No Covenant seemed to had entered before them. The corridor was long. There was few rooms adjacent to it. When they looked inside, there was only some machines, or generators, in the middle of the room's. Six thought they were power generators. They continued through the complex. Six marveled at the design.

The architecture was strange. The corridor was wide and pillars with bright lights on them stood in the middle. Glowing symbols covered the walls which in turn were colored silver-gray. Six remembered he had seen some of the symbols on the armor of a Brute Chieftain. But this structure wasn't Covenant. Blue lights marked the ceiling. The doors were small. They consisted of metal and glass, with a strange glowing symbol in the middle. The doors automatically opened whenever they got near one. The floor had the same odd looking symbols being transmitted from the pillars in wide lines, reaching doors and other pillars. Six thought they transmitted power. Large open areas, covered with shadow was etched high above in the walls. Six gave a weary look to each and one of them. They were perfect places to ambush them from. Or hide. They had searched the entire complex. There was no sign of Dr. Halsey. Six sighed. _'Shit'_

They had reached the end of the corridor. A door, this time without the glass, stood there. Six took cover on it's left side, next to the wall. Jun holstered his sniper rifle and produced his side-arm. He faced the door head on. He looked at Six who in turn nodded. And Jun went inside.

It was dark. When Six' eyes had adjusted, his jaw dropped. The room was massive. A dozen Pelicans could easily fit inside. The roof was shaped like a dome and it was easily four hundred meters high. They couldn't even see the bottom. They stood on a small terrace. On the right side of it was what seemed like a holographic control board, colored blue with specks of gold, hovering in the air. On the opposite of the terrace stood a circular shaped platform with a large device in the middle. Six gave a command and his visor automatically zoomed in on the device. He couldn't tell what it was from this distance, even with the zoom. The platform was supported by a lone large column. The same odd looking symbols from the corridor covered the walls of the dome as well as the column. The symbols on the walls reached for the roof, all lines meeting each other in the middle. Six

was amazed that something or someone could build anything remotely similar to this. He wondered how a race, so advanced, could disappear.

"So, what do we do now? How the hell do we get over there" Jun pointed towards the platform. Six didn't answer. He instead walked over to the control board. He inspected it, trying to even remotely understand how it worked. He gave up on trying to understand the symbols. So instead, he touched it and the holographic image immediately turned green. Six removed his hand. Shimmering lights appeared between the terrace and the platform. In a matter of moments, it turned to a solid blue light, resembling a bridge, two meters wide. Jun stood before it. He dropped down to a knee and touched it with his hand. The light waved around it. Jun looked at Six. "It's solid" he said. He stood up, looked at the light for a moment, and then he stepped onto it. He then began walking towards the platform. Six seemingly analyzed the bridge, and then he followed Jun.

The device in the middle of the platform turned more detailed as they got closer to it. The glowing lines, which Six guessed was power conduits, had turned brighter as it grew closer to the device. The device itself seemed to have a control board resembling the one Six had just touched. It was holographic, colored blue with specks of gold. However, in the middle was what seemed like a circular silver hatch. The holographic display surrounded it everywhere, except for a small speck beneath it. There stood a single large symbol, shaped like an upside down 'V' with a round ring above it. The symbol was covered with a bright white light. They stood before the control board now, overlooking it.

"Should we touch it?" Jun asked. "For all we know that symbol might as well mean 'self-destruct' in that alien language".

"Maybe it does. We're dead anyway. Might as well go down taking that Covvie army outside with us." Six said, gesturing a spartan smile.

"You have a weird sense of humor, my friend" Jun said, as he gestured back. Six steeled himself and touched the symbol. It immediately turned green, and then it disappeared. The device started to hum. The humming grew louder and louder. The glowing lines grew brighter and Six wondered if he had made a terrible mistake. When everything seemed to erupt in an explosion, the humming stopped, and the glowing lines disappeared. The room turned dark. The hatch in the middle opened up. Six looked around and then fixed his eyes on Jun.

"I think I caused a power shutdown, Jun" Six said.

"No shit." Jun responded.

Six activated his flashlight on his helmet. Jun did the same. It was completely dark inside the dome. The bridge behind them had deactivated. Six heard a slight hum coming from the device. He turned his head and looked at it. A crystal appeared. It was glowing white, with a pink light appearing from inside. It was large, around twenty five centimeters. The middle of it was round, while the ends narrowed, creating two arrowheads. Six and Jun looked at it with amazement. It was beautiful. Suddenly they heard noises coming from far behind them.

"The power shortage must have killed the doors. The Covenant are inside!" Jun shouted. Six agreed. He grabbed the crystal. He did not like their tactical situation. They were trapped on the platform. There was no way out. He heard the loud barks of the Brutes and the high pitched voices of Grunts. They were closing the distance fast. It would only be a matter of time before the power came back on and the enemy would finish them.

"What the hell do we do now?" Jun asked with a whisper. Suddenly, a voice appeared. Six and Jun froze.

"Voice identification confirmed. Identity: Two samples of Reclaimers. Enough power in matrix for transportation. Matrix at 99.7% completion. Time-effect will be slightly altered. No danger. Activating transportation matrix. Stand by." The voice seemed to come from above, but at the same time, from all directions.

"What the hell was that?" Six asked. He was confused. Jun just looked at the ceiling, not knowing what to say. "Reclaimers, that us?"

The voice appeared again. "Indeed. You are Reclaimers. You are Inheritors. I am 542 Jolly Jumper, the supervisor of this Installation. I am this installation. Now, please ready yourself. Grab onto each other, and hold the matrix. You will then be transported away. In ten, nine, eight.."

"Do as it says, Jun!" Six shouted. The Covenant was near now. They could hear them just outside the doors of the room.

"six, five, four.."

Jun grabbed hold of Six, as Six held the crystal in his left hand. He was staring at the doors. He saw a slight opening in the middle, and two rough and furred hands protruding from it. The doors were pried open, and he saw Brutes entering the terrace. They saw Six and Jun immediately and opened fire with their large crude weapons. Spikes flew past them overhead, other hit them head on. The impacts was absorbed by their shields.

"two, one, transportation matrix engaged. Goodbye, Reclaimers."

Shimmering lights appeared to engulf them, and Six was blinded, once again. He then felt pain. The pain was on par with the augmentation process. It felt like his innards turned inside out, It felt like his bones were ripped apart by the atomic scale and it felt like his entire being ceased to exist. He tried to close his eyes, but there were no eyelids to be closed. He tried to scream, but there was no mouth or tongue to produce one. He hoped this was just all a dream.

And then he felt solid ground. He could open his eyes again. The shimmering light had disappeared. He was still holding Jun. He could feel his mouth and tongue lying inside it. The crystal lay half broken in his hand. He looked at the two parts for a full second, and then he placed them in his compartment on his left thigh. He then felt an immediate urge to puke. He ripped off his helmet and threw up on the ground. Jun looked at him for a moment, and then immediately did the same.

"I hope I never get to do that again. I felt like I fucking died and was resurrected again." Jun said. Six agreed. _'My thoughts exactly'. _When he was feeling better, he stood up. He wiped off the puke on his chin with his hand. He checked his equipment. Everything seemed to be working. He then noticed the date on his HUD. September 5, 2552. _'So the crystal bends time and space.. only it had a flaw in the time, just as the construct said.'_ He then took in his surroundings. They were on solid ground. There was grass and hills and bodies of water. It looked like what he remembered from his home. It looked peaceful. He wondered if he was dead. He looked up, and then he saw something odd. A weird shape was where there should be none. He followed the weird shape with his eyes. He then turned around, and saw the same shape. He then put two and two together and said: "Jun, we're standing on a ring."

*Authors Note* Since I haven't read FIRST STRIKE or anything associated with the current time that this story takes place(except for the internet infos) I had to use my imagination. I'm quite happy with the end result anyway. The story simply wrote itself. I had a lot of Halo levels in mind when writing this, and I hope I at least got some Forerunner architecture right.

I've read somewhere about a Crystal found underneath CASTLE base which, supposedly altered time/space. Since I didn't really have a plan for how Six and Jun would get off of Reach, they had to use the crystal. Hope you people aren't pissed I took some liberties with the crystal.

Sorry for the late update. I had to work in southwest Sweden, where I stayed in a house on the countryside during my free time. There was no internet out there, so I couldn't really do any research or write much. Thanks for the kind comments! Keeps me going!

6. Veins on fire

Chapter 6. Veins on fire.

August 15, 2542

Aboard UNSC Hopeful, zero-gee military hospital.

The boy was now eleven.

He sat along with his 299 comrades of the Spartan III Beta company in the large briefing aula of the largest mobile military platform he had ever seen. Ten orderly rows with thirty chairs each decorated the large aula. The light from the ceiling was slightly too bright. Medics and scientists dressed in white stood next to the walls. He was nervous.

Beta company had, for the course of one and a half year, received human growth hormone, as well as cartilage, muscle and bone supplements which had been intermingled with their diet. Puberty had been artificially induced. The boy was eleven, but had the build of a sixteen year old who had the body of an olympic athlete. It had been hard, relearning how his body worked all over again. The trainees had to relearn how to shoot, jump, run and fight. The hardest of it all had been to learn how to grip things with his hands again, applying

just enough force for the gripping to be succesful.

Chief Mendez stood before them in the aula. A door opened in the back. The chief let out a roar. "Officer on deck!". The men and women of Beta company immediately rose to attention, eyes fixed on a point before them, their bodies standing straight, chest slightly puffed out, chins high and arms tight against their bodies. Six allowed himself to follow the man with his eyes as he walked past the company. In no time at all, Lieutenant Commander Ambrose stood before them. "At ease." he said and saluted. The company crossed their arms behind their backs and separated their legs. "Sit." The commander ordered. They sat down as one.

"We have prepared you as best we can. You are the finest Spartans I have ever seen. For years you have trained in Camp Currahee to become the best of the best, to become more than soldiers, to become Spartans. However, no amount of training can prepare you for what is to come." The Lieutenant said. The boy fixed his eyes intensively on his commanding officer. He could tell that the Lieutenant had altered his mood slightly. He could even feel it. He continued: "It is time for you to graduate. It is time for your augmentations. It is time for your final step in becoming true Spartans. In this briefing that will follow I will tell you, with the help of some of the medical officers-" he gestured to the medics and scientists "-exactly what will happen to you for the hours that is to come. Is that understood?"

"Sir! Yes, Sir!" the company responded to their officer. The boy could hear an echo of their response in the room. The Lieutenant smiled. And then he explained to them of the procedures. He told them that they would be sedated and injected with chemical cocktails that will alter their muscles, bones and minds. In fact, they would alter their very genetic structure. Each of these different cocktails would create a ceramic layer on top of their bones, rendering them nearly unbreakable. They would augment their strength so that they would have the strength equivalent of three men. They would decrease their neural reaction time by 400%, augmenting their reflexes to lightning speed. Finally, they would increase their durability, making them able to withstand much more punishment than a normal man. One reason for this increased durability was an alteration to the natural healing process of each human. The cocktails would increase it, creating some sort of healing factor. The recovering time for wounds would decrease by 32%.

The Lieutenant waved to a medical officer. The medic immediately responded and entered the stage before the company. He then explained that as the Spartans grew older, the more powerful the augmentations would become, increasing their strength, speed and durability.

The boy started looking forward to the procedures by now.

However, not the Lieutenant had told them about the risks too. And the pain. The Lieutenant had shown them a video of the Spartan II procedures. How, on certain Spartans, their bones twisted in unnatural shapes, how they started to spasm uncontrolling and how some simply had stopped moving, their vitals dropping to zero. Over fifty percent of the Spartan II recruits had died or were now suffering from their failed augmentations. The Lieutenant had promised them, this would not happen now.

He asked them for volunteers. He asked them if they still wanted this. He asked the ones who truly wished it to rise. The boy immediately rose from his chair, followed by the entire company. The boy saw the commander smile.

The company marched in orderly rows through Bravo section. Eight entire decks and been sealed off limits by ONI section three. The only individuals that was allowed inside the section was the ones directly associated with the Spartan III program, as well as the medical officers and bio-scientists. The company had reached a large room. The room was completely sterile. The walls were colored white, and on one wall, slightly above the ground, was a large glass mirror. The boy guessed the room used to be a conference room, as speakers hung in the ceiling as well as cameras and computers. There were three hundred metallic beds in there, and next to each bed stood medical equipment and a nurse. Each nurse had a three digit number on their right sleeves. It was the same numbers that each person in the company had been assigned.

"Find your code, and then lay down on your beds" a female voice commanded through the speakers. The boy thought the voice was comforting. He found his number in the middle of the room. _'B312. That's me.' _he told himself. He laid down on the bed, and immediately shrugged. The aluminium bed was cold. He looked at the nurse. The boy could tell she smiled, hidden behind a filter covering half her face. Her eyes, though. Her eyes did not lie. They expressed worry and pity. The boy fixed his eyes on the ceiling instead. "Connect the recruits." the female voice commanded. He could hear the nurses connecting his comrades to the medical equipment. His personal nurse did the same. The boy looked at the holographic image to his right. In the upper left corner stood his name along with his code number. He could see his body lying on the bed, displaying veins and his skeleton. He saw his heart frequency and some other vitals. In the lower right corner was four green bars. The boy fixed his eyes on the ceiling again.

"I have high hopes for this one." Lieutenant Commander Ambrose said as he pointed on one of the screens. The screen displayed the boy, lying on his bed, seemingly looking straight at the camera in the ceiling. The room behind the glass high up on the wall was full of people, reading each and every Spartans' vitals and movements.

"I know what you mean, sir. I have only seen one other with that genetic compability, and I think you know who I mean." Chief Mendez responded. The Lieutenant knew who Mendez was talking about. "B312 is our top recruit. He has performed excellent in each and every task assigned to him, sir." Mendez continued.

The Lieutenant wrinkled his eyebrows. "I know. He has a tendency to go lone wolf on training missions, though. Teamwork is not one of his strong sides."

Chief Mendez agreed.

"Mendez, I have received a request to extract two of our best Spartans from the company." the Lieutenant said.

"Sir?" Chief Mendez asked with a slight shocked voice.

"I'll explain." the Lieutenant responded.

"Augmentation procedure begins in five.. four.. three." The comforting voice stated. Large needles filled with transparent fluids penetrated the boy's skin. He started feeling numb, and his eyelids grew heavy. "two.. one.. augmentation procedure activated." Suddenly, he felt a sharp pain. His very being felt on fire. It felt like his bones were smashed and reassembled. It felt like his blood had turned to acid. His muscles grew larger, and his eyes went dark. It felt like his nerve endings was cut with a rusty blade. The boy restrained himself. He focused on the techniques Chief Mendez had taught him to ignore the pain. But this pain was different. He started to spasm. He slammed the bed with his fists, and it buckled where they had connected. He wanted to die. He would do anything to escape the pain. Suddenly, as soon as it had started, it died away. He opened his eyes, and his vision had returned, only blurred. All he could feel was a headache. He heard a distant voice calling for him. His vision started to fade again. He saw the Lieutenant appear, standing over him. The boy thought he looked worried. And then he passed out.

August 19, 2542

Aboard UNSC Hopeful, zero-gee military hospital.

The boy woke up. The pain was gone. The boy looked around. He was in a small room. There was nothing in the but him, his bed and some IV-equipment which was connected to him. He immediately rose up and panicked. He tore the medical equipment away and tried to stand up. The slightest movement seemed to throw him off balance, though. It was as if everything he did happened at three times the speed than normal. The IV-equipment had let out a loud beeping sound. The boy immediately placed his hands on his ears, trying to tune the sound out. He fell down on his knees, still holding his hands over his ears. He screamed, a loud animalistic scream. He noticed the door opening and several men dressed in white and gray body armor reached for him and grabbed hold of his arms and tried to pull him up from the floor. They failed. It was as if he was simply too heavy for them. The boy identified them as enemy combatants. He managed to break his right arm free and slammed one of the men into the wall. The man passed out. The boy tossed another one away across the room. He then kicked another one in the stomach, doubling the man over in pain.

"Spartan B-312, stand down immediately! That's an order!" A voice commanded. He recognized the voice as Lieutenant commander Ambrose. The boy complied. He immediately tried to stand at attention, but failed. He lost his balance and his vision became blurred. The Lieutenant noticed this and quickly helped him stabilize himself.

"Easy son, easy. Sit down on the bed, Spartan." The Lieutenant said. He turned his attention to the men, meaning to give them a well deserved punishment. But when he saw the state they were in, he immediately called for medical assistance through his personal comm.

"QRT, this is Lt. Commander Ambrose. We need medical assistance in room twelve, Bravo section.. What? No, not for the Spartan. It's for the officers checking up on him." he said the last part with a slight chuckle. The men on the floor groaned in response.

Three hours passed after the incident, and B-312 was allowed to move around, training on his movement control. He had stopped a medical officer in the hall and had asked how many had survived the procedure. The officer had told him that everyone had arrived and were on their way back to Onyx. B-312 asked why he was left behind, and the officer had told him he had no idea why. B-312 decided to ask the Lt. Commander the next chance he got.

His training went well for the next couple of days. He had mastered his movements in a matter of hours. The last time it had taken him days. He noticed that things had begun slowing down around him. It was as if everything was moving at semi-slowmotion. If he concentrated hard enough, or moved faster, things would slow down even more.

He had hit the gym. He had gone too long without working out with proper weights. The only physical training he had received was his normal morning gymnastics. He had noticed how much easier every practise had become, and he had to do three times the number in order to be satisfied. The gym was no different.

He had realised that this was the effect of the augmentations. It had taken him longer to come to this insight than he thought. But it was all clear now.

He walked down the corridor and on his way to his room when he heard a crackling from the speakers that was fixed on the walls.

"Spartan B-312. Lt. Commander Ambrose is waiting for you in the aula."

B-312 turned around and walked towards the aula. He opened the doors and Lt. Commander Ambrose sat in a chair at the end of the room. He stepped inside. In front of the Lt. Commander he saw a holographic screen. Even from the distance in the back, he could clearly see the text that was displayed there. He reached the Lieutenant and came to attention and saluted. "Spartan B-312 reporting as ordered, Sir!"

"At ease. Sit down." the Lieutenant ordered. B-312 did so immediately. "No doubt you have been wondering why you aren't on Onyx with your company, and still stuck here."

"Sir, I have been wondering. I was meaning to ask you why." B-312 responded.

"The reason why is that you are to be transferred. You will no longer be under my command. You are one of the best Spartans I have ever seen. And that was before the augmentations. Now, you have unlimited potential. You have always operated on your own, even if your squad was near. People in the high ranks have taken notice of this as well. Now, you will truly be alone out there."

"Sir?" B-312 asked. He was confused. He had trained with his company for his entire life. Operating separately was something foreign. True, he was a lone wolf. But he always knew he had his company in his near vicinity.

"You will receive this armor." the Lieutenant touched the holographic

screen. An image of an armor appeared. "This is the Mjolnir Mk. IV[B]. It is the standard duty armor for Spartan II's. With this, you will be able to do much more damage to the enemy than even a squad of Spartans in SPI armor would be able to."

B-312 stared at the screen with amazement, not knowing what to say. "Sir, I-"

"I know what you feel, son. The exact same feeling I had when I received mine." the Lieutenant smiled. "You will also receive a new rank." the Lieutenant produced two doubled bars in silver with his hands. "Congratulations, Lieutenant."

B-312 eyes were now wide. "Thank you sir." he managed to say after awhile.

"Now, let me introduce you to your commanding officer to be. You answer to him, and only to him." the Lieutenant touched the screen, and an image of an old man dressed in white appeared. The old man had medals on his chest and black bars with gold on them. B-312 recognized him immediately as one of the highest commanding officers in the UNSC. The man opened his mouth and said "Nice to meet you son."

*AUTHORS NOTE* Finally, the augmentation process is done with. I tried to write it as accurately as possible. Well, to my knowledge of how it happened, anyway.

Hope you can guess who the old man in the end was? =)

7. Cowards, Covvies and Spartans

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Chapter 7: Cowards, Covvies and Spartans Part 1

September 5, 2552

Location Unknown.

"Brilliant. Just fuckin' brilliant." Jun said as he sighed. "We saw everyone in our team get killed, we somehow survive Reach, we get chased by Brutes and to top it all off, we get stranded on a huge fucking ring in space. Someone up there is messing with me." Jun turned his head up, staring at the sky. And then he exclaimed: "Fuck you, big man." Six didn't say anything, but he shared his feelings. The past few months had been the roughest in his life. Not even SERE, Survival, Evasion, Rendezvous, Extraction with Chief Mendez had been this difficult. He did not complain. though. There was no point to it. Things was as it was. If there was one thing Six had learned during his brief existence, it is that you have got to make do with what you have. And right now, they only had each other.

Six chuckled.

"What?" Jun asked. "Nothing.." Six responded. "It's just that if Carter had heard you, You'd be scolded so hard, you'd be on your knees begging for forgiveness.." Jun set his eyes on the ground. "Yeah..". They both remained silent for a while. Remembering their

past team mates and comrades. Everyone they had lost.

After a while, Six came to his senses. He inhaled deeply, and then he exhaled.

"We need to move out." Six said. Jun raised his head. He seemed tired. "Take the lead." Jun added. Six did, heading into the unknown.

Four hours later.

"Captain! We cannot hold this position! The Covenant will soon breach our defenses! Captain!" the private shouted to his superior officer under an intense plasma bombardment. The covenant assault had been relentless. The beach on which the two armies were fighting was colored red and blue and purple and black. The black sand was scorch marks, as gifted by a dozen Wraith tanks, while the others' was the blood of the warriors. The Covenant artillery had been firing their super heated plasma barrages on a regular basis, melting the titanium-A armor of the Scorpion tanks and disintegrating the marines. The lucky one's. anyway. The light scouting vehicles, Ghosts, the Covenants' equivalent of a warthog, was manned by Grunts. They were trying to flank the already staggering UNSC lines as Elites and hundreds of Grunts charged head on. The marines was defending their flanks valiantly as rocket after rocket hit ghosts and turned them into exploding metal carcasses.

The 9th light armoured battalion had dug in. It was clear the commander had put his emphasis on defense, rather than offense. Everywhere on the beach was rocks and boulders giving excellent cover. Unfortunately, it served the enemy perfectly as well. The marines had dug fox holes and set out barb wire where they were able to and thought it would give the most damage. The barb wire wouldn't stop an elite, but the Grunts had hard times getting past them, and in turn became easy pickings.

The armor, which mostly consisted of Scorpion MBT's stood in the rear due to them having superior range as well as being some what protected while the infantry took the brunt of the assault. A some what unconventional and uneffective strategy, it turned out to be. No commander would place his armor in the back, instead, he would simultaneously link the armor and the infantry together to make the most of the two elements.

The marines did rather well, considering the circumstances. The previous advances of the enemy had been halted and pushed back. However, for each enemy advance there had been dozens of marines dying. They cannot hold much longer without proper reinforcements arriving or an excellent plan from the commander.

"Be quiet, marine! Less shouting more shooting! The captain's got a shitload on his mind and he does not need you, a god damn private, to tell him how to do his god damn job! Is that clear?" His platoon commander barked, a rather tall bulky looking man whose true love in this life was the UNSC marine corps. The private guessed the platoon commander was born on Earth, due to his specific accent. He thought it sounded provoking. The private was from Earth too. His entire family was well and safe, and he missed them.. a lot.

"Sir! Yes si-" the private didn't finish his sentence. Smoke erupted

from his helmet as well as scorch marks and flame. He fell down dead on the spot, his eyelids still opened and the blush of his chin still there. The private was nineteen the day he died.

"God damnit private.." the sergeant whispered as he shook his head. He turned his concentration on the enemy advance once again, as a personal act of revenge.

The captain had an apatic look to his person. He stared towards the enemy, or rather, ahead of them. A thousand mile stare, as the veterans would say. The captain had not seen much real combat even though he had been an officer for fourteen years, starting out as a lieutenant fresh from the officer academy. He was assigned after the examination almost immediately. He had ended up as a captain as a 'thank you' for his seemingly heroic actions on an Inner Colony, where he supposedly lead a battalion of marines into an ambush and fought his way out of there, taking hundreds of the enemy with him. The truth was, however, that no one from that battalion had survived 'cept him. In fact, he was not even remotely near that location where the ambush had taken place. He had pulled ranks and replaced his position with an even fresher lieutenant, staying in the officers' mess hall. He had been quick to make up a story on how he 'survived' the horrific slaughter to his superior officers. They had been immensely impressed, as they too lacked combat experience and quickly recommended him for promotion. The battalion he was leading now had all heard the story of him surviving and had high hopes of his capability. Now, seeing as things were as it was, they were hesitating.

As plasma streaked the air and burning the sand to glass, a slight whisper escaped the captain's mouth. The captain's eyes were wide open, and his facial expression was completely blank.

"What was that, captain?" The sergeant standing next to him asked as he placed his palm next to his ear, in an attempt to overpower the deafening noise of battle.

"Run.." the captain said. The sergeant stared at his captain, not believing what he had just heard. The sergeant was a true veteran of hundreds of battles, and he had never heard those words before. They did not exist in his dictionary.

"What the..? Captain, the entire battalion will get slaughtered if we turn our backs towards the Covvies and not to mention the.." the sergeant tried to no vain.

"Run.. Run.. Run! Run! Flee for your lives!" the captain cried as loud as he could. Some marines in the defensive line of rocks and fox holes looked at each other, asking their comrades if they really had heard what they had just heard. The captain turned around and began running away, not looking back. The marines were in full shock. Some began to back away in a somewhat crouched position, looking at each other, not knowing what to do. Soon the entire line was in disarray. Some had turned tail and ran as fast as their legs could muster, others stood firm, encouraged by their squad leaders and platoon commanders, not wanting to leave their comrades behind. Dozens had already turned tail by now.

The Covenant had noticed the drop of morale, and the Elites let out an immense simultaneous roar. The advance was intesified, and more

marines died as a result of their comrades' betrayal. They felt scared and confused, wondering if this was all just a bad dream.

"Jun, give me your rifle." Six told his friend. Jun looked at him, confused. He reluctantly did as he was told and produced his sniper rifle, giving it to Six. Six took the weapon and immediately aimed it towards the horizon, focusing through the scope. He had noticed something odd in the distance. A small speck, covered in shadow. Six, as all Spartans, had enhanced vision. However, from the distance they were standing their vision, even combined with their helmets' unbuilt zoom, was too great to see clearly. His face, unnoticable because of his visor, had a look of concentration. The small speck grew bigger as the distance minimized.

"Jun. We're not alone out here." Six said as he gave the weapon back to it's owner. Jun brought the weapon up to his shoulder and looked through the scope. "What the.." he said, shocked.

Through the scope, the shape of a man running crazed dressed in a UNSC uniform appeared. His rank, which was shown by a patch on his right arm, presented him as a captain of the marine corps. A damn well terrified captain running straight towards them, now and then looking back for a moment before continuing. He had not detected them yet.

"He looks as if he has seen a monster." Jun stated calmly, almost amused at the unfamiliar sight. He had worked with Spartans for so long he had almost forgotten what fear truly was and looked like.

"true. Come on. Let's ask this good captain why he is running the equivalent of a marathon on a god knows where Ring world." Six said with a hint of bitterness.

"Ring world, huh? I like it. For being a man of few words, you sure as hell have got a knack for making up new names, Six." Jun chuckled. Six gestured a Spartan smile, and then nodded his head towards the captain.

They sprinted towards him. They were no more than a few kilometers from his position. He had not detected them yet, even as the ground was flat, blush by grass and sand, and the sky was clear. In no time at all, they had reached him.

The captain detected the two large.. things, a couple of hundred meters away. Dust erupted from the ground as each footstep reached solid ground, followed by the next. He immediately thought they were Spartans, as he examined their armor. The distance was great, though, and he had never seen Spartans in real life. '_Then I'm saved! But.. aren't their armor supposed to be green? But one of them has a green armor..' _he thought somewhat clear headed. '_but what if it's a trick? I can't take the chance! I won't die on this god forsaken ring!'. _He stopped and readied himself. He had not decided what to do yet. The two large armored men was still running towards him, inhumanly fast. He thought that no man, Spartan or not, could run at such a pace. The captain decided on what to do. He quickly produced his side-arm and aimed towards them. They were only twenty meters away.

The two Spartans stopped abruptly and looked at each other. They hadn't seen that one coming. A UNSC officer pulling a weapon, pointing it at them. Pointing it at Spartans.

Jun immediately opened his mouth and calmly asked "Captain. What the hell are you doing?"

"How do I know you're not a trick?" the captain asked, terrified. "For all I know you can be Covenant in disguise!" His eyes were wide open and his right hand holding his side-arm was shaking wildly. _'He's too far away for reason'. _Six thought and felt sorry for him.

"Now I've heard everything.." Jun said to Six, amused. "I've been called a demon, a freak and a hero, but never 'a trick'." Six was quiet. He knew they weren't going to be able to talk the man down. With a lightning fast sweep he pulled up his side-arm and shot the man's own, shattering it along with his hand. Blood, broken metal and some fingers dropped to the ground. The captain fell down on his knee's. Not from pain, no, he was too shocked and terrified to feel pain, but more from the force of impact of the high caliber round. Jun gazed at his comrade. Six pulled his side-arm down and fastened it onto his magnetic clap on his right thigh. He then began walking towards the captain, and when he stood before him, towering, he asked with a harsh voice:

"Now, tell us why you are running."

The man looked up, holding his right hand in his left, trying to stop the bleeding. The man seemed to get a grip of reality once more. His eyes were watering and his voice was a mumble. "The Covenant.. they.. they.. My god, they'll kill us all! They were too many!"

Six immediately fixed his eyes on Jun, who had appeared beside him. He then turned his attention towards the captain again, only this time, he knelt down bringing himself down to the same level as the superior officer.

"The Covenant? Where?" Six asked with a harsh voice. He rarely raised his voice. The captain failed to respond, and instead he began crying. The man was broken. He didn't need to answer, however, as Six heard panicked screams coming from the horizon. Suddenly, dozens of panicked marines appeared, running in disarray. Six got up and stared at the disheartening image before him. He knew immediately what he needed to do. He nodded to Jun, who immediately understood. And then they sprinted towards the panicked mob.

"Run away!"

"Run or we're all dead!"

"I don't wanna die!"

The panicked men shouted in chorus. Some just screamed, and some just cried. But they all kept running. Six absorbed the scene before him. Rarely had he seen marines act like this. And when they had, they had been part of the most intense battles of the war. The distance became smaller.

"What the.." Someone said, and slowed his pace and then

stopped.

"What is that?" Another said, focusing his vision on the two objects moving towards them with an amazing speed.

Another had stopped entirely as his jaw had dropped to the ground. He rubbed his eyes with his fists and focused his vision. And then he said: "It's Spartans. The Spartans have come!" Some of the men stopped running entirely, their fighting spirits immediately rising. Other's kept on, not caring whether an extra battalion of reinforcements had come or extra Spartans. Their minds were set on survival.

Six passed through the disorganised mob. He pushed the few unlucky ones who stood in his way to the ground, breaking bones as they felt the impact of powered armor meeting unprotected bones. He didn't care nor bother to help them to their feet. They didn't deserve better. He kept running, his speed increasing. There was a pitch ahead, leading down to a beach. Six could clearly see the Covenant army hammering the UNSC lines. He slowed down somewhat, slightly disheartened by the sight. There were large gaps in the defensive line, and the distance between the two armies was as short as 50 meters. Men lay dead everywhere. On the beach, in the foxholes and some had been pulled back, but died later. A few, who had been wounded was being tended to by medics. A large part of the Scorpion tanks had been destroyed, displaying smoking and smoldering corpses of the tanks. The sounds was deafening as the shattering of guns and barrages of shells and mortars struck.

Then he set his mind right and increased his pace.

He unholstered his rifle and produced a grenade from a magnetic clap on his side. He readied it, found a position in the enemy advance where he should throw, and then he threw it away with superhuman strength. The grenade went high and long, landing in the midst of a squad of Grunts. The Grunts stopped their advance and looked at it before one of them cried something in their alien language. The squad panicked. The grenade detonated with a loud bang, and bits of dismembered Grunts flew in every direction. Their methane tanks set on fire and exploded, creating a larger area of the blast, dropping the shields of a nearby elite instantly. Six placed a well aimed shot at it's head, blowing it's brains out. He increased his pace and with all his power he performed a giant leap, over the UNSC lines. Some marines' eyes almost popped out of their sockets as they saw the grey armored giant of a man appearing over, and then ahead of them, landing with a loud thump as sand erupted around him in whirls. Six instantly got up and continued onward, strafing and dodging and rolling, as he emptied clip after clip in the enemy ranks. Alien after alien fell, and when his shields dropped, he immediately took cover behind sand dunes and boulders, waiting for them to recharge. An elite Ultra had spotted him and began charging towards him with an energy sword. Six' energy shields had not finished recharging yet, so he improvised. As the elite was just about to connect, Six leaped over it in a somersault, spraying it's back with lead. It's shields dropped as Six landed. He then produced a kick to it's back, and he could hear bones breaking in it's spine. Six then immediately jumped on top of it and struck it in the head with his rifle, shattering skull. His shields were fully recharged now.

Jun had taken position behind a large rock, providing Six with

covering fire. He focused on the, what appeared to be, commanding officers. He made every shot count. He had only two rounds left. He spotted an Ultra in the middle of a large group of enemies, covering behind some rocks. Jun inhaled, adjusted his scope and set his sights on the head of the Ultra, he then exhaled and fired. The first shot dropped it's shields and made it stagger back, and the second shot, which came immediately afterwards, disintegrated it's head. Jun then holstered his rifle and sprinted towards the lines of marines.

"No way.. there's no way.." a private said as he stared at the amazing feat being performed before him. A Spartan had come to them. And it wasn't the one they had seen onboard the Pillar of Autumn either. He looked at his squad mates to make sure he wasn't dreaming. They were staring as well, and had stopped firing, too amazed to do it. The entire UNSC lines had seemed to stop to watch the spectacle of a one man army. A Sergeant came to his senses and directed his attention towards some nearby marines.

"What, you god damn ladies just gonna leave that Spartan out there all by his lonesome? Is that it? Not on my watch it's not. Fire!" the Sergeant cried as he fired his battle rifle. "My god, these Spartans makes a lovely mess of things.." he then said to himself. He heard a large thump beside him, and then spotted a shadow covering him. He then heard a quiet voice say:

"Yes, we do. Where can I find a weapon?"

Authors Note I picked up inspiration from the beach assault fight in Halo Combat Evolved and some other things for this chapter. It was fun to write. Gotta understand the captain though, shit, I'd probably chicken out as well in such a fight._

Sorry for late update, but I'm working a lot. Money, you know.

8. Spartan revelations

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Chapter 8

September 6, 2552

Installation 04

A spark of hope had lit inside the sergeant. It was small, but still, it was there. The Covenant had been pounding them day and night with plasma bombardments and mass charges by grunts and elites for what had felt like an eternity. Then, to top it all off, the Captain had fled, taking dozens of men with him, leaving his already decimated battalion behind. The situation had been unbearable, and the betrayal had felt like he had been struck by an ice cold knife in his back. Shortly afterwards, when he truly felt the enemy would breach their defense and finish the battalion off, not one, but two Spartans had appeared seemingly out of nowhere, bringing destruction to the enemy in their wake, and bringing a much needed morale boost to the marines, the sergeant included.

The sergeant sat in a crouched position. His rifle hung loose in his

hand. His eyes looked as if they would soon pop out of their sockets, and his jaw littered the ground. He felt a mix of confusion and hope, still not believing that this is happening.

"Sergeant, I repeat, I need a weapon and ammunition." Jun said as he grew tired of the forty-something-sergeants' slacking and speechless frame. He didn't have time to just stand there, leaving Six alone in the midst of the enemies ranks.

The sergeant came to, and his mind returned to reality. He quickly looked around him onto the ground, searching. The private he had been scolding earlier lay near him, his head half melted from a plasma bolt. One of his eyes still stared up in the sky, the other nowhere to be seen. The sergeant placed his palm on top of the private's eyelid, and shut it. He knew it was a meaningless gesture, but he felt he owed the private as much. The sergeant then grabbed his weapon, a DMR, as well as several magazines of ammunition and gave them to Jun. Jun absorbed the scene for a moment, and then he nodded, as a thank you, and then he crouched. Some stray plasma bolts whissed by overhead. Near missed all of them.

"We ran into a captain running mad a few clicks in that direction" Jun pointed towards the way they had came, "as well as a few dozen marines. You know anything about that?" he asked rhetorically. Jun had a good guess what the answer was going to be.

The sergeant fixed his eyes on the ground and then shook his head before he responded. His face turned crimson red.

"That's the son of a bitch of a coward captain of ours. He lost his shit and fled, bringing those marines you saw with him. They left us here as easy pickings for the enemy. I'm sorry that you did not put a bullet in his head. Mark my words, the bullet would be well deserved." The sergeant was furious. Jun just stared at the sergeant. He was sorry as well that he had not shot the captain, when he had heard this. It was one thing being consumed by fear, but as a commanding officer, his first duty was to his men, placing their well being ahead of his own.

"How the hell did you end up on this god forsaken ring, Sir?" the sergeant asked, even though he outranked Jun. It was common that officers did not know how to respond to a Spartan, as they rarely displayed their ranks. Jun turned his head towards the enemy, quickly checking up on Six, making sure he is alright, before responding: "It's a long story. Listen, sergeant, I need you to find a comm device, and sync the frequency with the one me and my comrade is using. The channel is sierra-alpha-alpha-two-niner-zero. Is that understood?" The sergeant looked perplex, but understood a moment later, and then he nodded. Jun wasted no time and set off in a sprint towards the enemy. He jumped up on top of a large rock and lay down, assuming a firing position, and began picking the enemy off once more. Jun found Six in his sights. Six had advanced several meters towards the enemy, and marines had begun abandoning their defenses to advance as well, closely behind Six. Their morale and hope had returned. The marines took cover behind boulders and rocks, and lay down covering fire as Six plowed through the enemy. A SPNKR missile flew across the battlefield and hit a Ghost. A grunt flew out of the seat as it's methane tank caught fire and exploded in mid air not far from a group of jackals, depleting their shields and disorientating them. The SPNKR was followed by a barrage of bullets, tearing the

birdlike aliens apart. The marines cheered for each kill. Days of pain and misery was let out in mere moments. It was worth it.

Six had left dozens of corpses behind him. Jun was impressed. He had seen what Six could do, but this was outstanding. He now knew why Six had acted alone for several years and had survived, before being absorbed into Noble team. Six dodged and jumped and fired. He dove into a group of grunts, spraying three of them with his rifle, while turning around, penetrating one of them with a knife through the skull, before turning around again using the rifle as a sledge, hammering another grunt. Plasma erupted around him as he jumped to the side, grabbing a plasma grenade and throwing it away, hitting an Elite. Jun could clearly hear a roar before it exploded, and the Elite disappeared. Jun shook his head, partly chuckling and partly to recollect himself. He resumed firing. He focused on the Jackals and Grunts in the plasma turrets as they provided the most hardships for the marines. A marine could dodge a plasma mortar from a Wraith, but not one thousand bolts from a turret. Dozens of plasma bolts hit the rock around him, melting stone. Jun pulled down for a few moments.

He memorized where the bolts had come from. He got up, assumed firing position, found the target, inhaled, steadied, exhaled, and then he fired. The bullet hit the grunt in its head, tearing it off. The body tipped out of the turret. A cloud of blue blood had colored the ground around it. Jun smiled.

'Almost there' Six said to himself as he continued. He ran almost at his top speed. The pipe of his assault rifle had begun glowing bright red as a result of the continuous firing. He ran and ran, spraying the enemies as he got past them. They did not even have time to react before they dropped to the ground riddled with bullets and shrapnel. There were not many elites there. Or at least not left. Six thanked Jun with his mind for the assistance in tearing through the enemy officers. Elites aside, there were, however, a large amount of grunts and jackals. Six left them for the marines. He was certain the marines could handle them. He had another target. A far larger target than a grunt.

His target was the wraiths.

Six made one last effort as the distance had minimized, performing a giant leap. He dropped a grenade in mid-air, detonating it amidst a group of jackals as he flew past them. Everything seemed to happen in slow-motion. Six could even tell their reactions to the unexpected gift, before disintegrating in a blue plasma flash, disintegrating them.

Six landed on one of the wraiths, tossing his rifle to the side. He began hammering the driver's hatch. The massive fist, with a force of several hundred kilograms brought down upon the hatch and dented the metal. The second strike bulged it, and the third broke it. He dug his fingers down and pulled the hatch off with his bare hands and threw it away. An elite sat in the cockpit, confused and surprised. It gathered itself almost immediately however, and reached for a plasma rifle. Six quickly reacted and struck the alien. Its head bent back in an unnatural angle. It died instantly. Six pulled the carcass up and threw it away from the wraith. The carcass landed with a heavy thump several meters away. He wasted no time and entered the cockpit and familiarized himself with the controls.

The entire Beta company of the Spartan III's had received training on covenant vehicles. Six, as with all vehicles he had handled, had felt as he belonged behind the controls instantly. He had graduated as a top recruit. That was one of the two reasons he had been enlisted as a pilot in the top secret Saber program. The other, was that he was a Spartan.

Six spun around and aimed the enormous Covenant tank towards the other remaining one. He fired, and the enemy wraith exploded in a flashing light. He was giving the marines a chance, an opportunity, to survive. He could hear the cheers from the marines as the enemy wraith had exploded into hundreds of pieces. The cheers were overwhelming, increasing his confidence. The grunts, on the other hand, panicked. Running around wild, seemingly in all directions. The marines made no effort tearing them apart. Fireteams and squads of marines shot at anything not looking human. In a matter of minutes, the last sound of gunfire ebbed out. Silence visited the battlefield for the first time in days.

Six checked his HUD and made a systems check. Everything seemed to be in working order. He then noticed something.

Thirty two minutes had passed since he and Jun had stormed the beach. Thirty two minutes of destruction. And salvation. He had saved them. The marines. A small victory for what had happened on Reach. Jorge would have been proud.

Six climbed out of the wraith. He surveyed the battlefield once more. Hundreds of dead, alien and human, littered the ground. The wounded was being taken care of by the medics and the officers were busy giving orders. The survivors looked shell shocked and sleep deprived. Six couldn't blame them.

His comm crackled to life.

"I got to tell you, Six, that was pretty damn impressive." Jun encouraged him. "I almost had a hard time keeping track of you during your personal blaze of glory"

"Thanks." He responded.

"Always short on words. At least that hasn't changed. Anyway, a sergeant is heading your way for a chat. He seems to be the highest ranking officer remaining of the battalion. Captain coward excluded." Jun notified.

"Roger that, out" Six responded. Six spotted the sergeant walking towards him.

His IFF recognized him as Staff Sergeant Roger Hawthorne. The sergeant sported a large scar on his left chin. He had a brown moustasche and green eyes. He looked as if he was in his mid fortys.

The sergeant was born on Earth and had enlisted in 2534, when he had reached the age of eighteen. He had served in countless campaigns, mostly defeats. He had received several medals, most notably for exceptional bravery. Six believed the man to be one who got the job done, no matter what.

"That was one hell of a show, Sir" the sergeant said with a heavy american accent. Six raised an eyebrow. _'Sir?' _

"I aim to please, sergeant. Your boys did good, as well." Six encouraged.

"That they did, that they did.. "The sergeant said as his head tilted towards the ground. He had a look of sorrow upon his face. He straightened himself out, almost immediately, seemingly afraid someone would notice his mood. He continued. "You know, I've seen my fair share of battles. I was on Reach, god damnit. But this, this was one of the worst. You saved our asses out here, Sir."

"Reach?" Six asked, curiously.

"Yep. Me and my boys left the destruction of the planet with the _Pillar of Autumn." _Six was shocked to hear the familiar name of the ship he had saved. "We had been fighting in almost every campaign over there, when we suddenly got ordered to board the ship for evac. Lord knows if I know why." The sergeant said. "You look familiar, now that I think of it, Sir. But that might be because we had another Spartan with us."

"I was there. On Reach." Six said as the sergeants eyes widened. _'Another Spartan?' _Six asked himself.

"Holy.." the sergeant begun, suddenly realizing where he had seen the grey armoured giant before.

"Where are we?" Six cut him off. Jun had appeared and was listening to the conversation.

"Well.. shit." the sergeant begun. "This might sound crazy. Well, how much more crazy can something get in times like these, huh? After we got off Reach, the captain immediately ordered us to prepare for slipspace. So we did, we strapped in, not knowing where we might be heading. They didn't even order us to the cryo chamber. After a week, or maybe two, we had seemingly reached our destination. A marine in my company, who was sitting by the window, had suddenly fell quiet. He usually was a talkative asswipe, but this time he fell real silent. Suddenly he told us 'hey, you gotta see this'. So we did. We walked over to where he was sitting, and I tell you, my jaw has never dropped so low before."

The sergeant stopped midway to illustrate how it looked. It amused Six.

"What I saw was an enormous artificial ring. Only, it looked habitable. You could almost see the little islands and continents and water on it. The other thing I saw was the large fleet of covenant ships guarding it. Eventually, one of their ships boarded ours. We fought hard for every inch, but they were tougher. Captain ordered to abandon ship, and so we did. And then we ended up here, trying to survive ever since."

Six thought long about what he had heard. Many questions echoed in his mind, none answered. Mostly, the questions regarded Cortana, and the ring.

"How many made it?" Six finally asked.

The sergeant thought about the question he had received, seemingly calculating and guessing what to answer. "My estimates, maybe three fourths of the ship. The captain and Spartan included. I should know, I was one of the last to leave."

*Authors Note* Sorry about late update, and yes, I know it's short. I will get better, both with longer texts and shorter time between updates.

9. Captain Keyes

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Chapter 9, Captain Keyes

September 6, 2552

Installation 04

The covenant had hit the _Pillar of Autumn_ hard. Within an hour, the heavy refitted _Halcyon_-class cruiser had fallen to the Covenant boarding parties, along with a large portion of the crew. Most had rendezvoused over time, but there were still some escape pods that had been swept away to locations far away. The crews had been unable to raise communications with many of them.

The Forward Command Post, or FCP, was busy and full of life, and death. Wounded lay where there was room. Those who had been lucky and had not received any heavy injuries had to make do with what they had. Officers were barking orders at the few marines remaining behind from the front lines to stand at guard duty. The lucky few of them. The rest of the battalions had been given orders to search for life pods and suppress enemy activity where they were able to.

Sound from approaching jet engines warned of activity. Pelicans approached the designated landing pad. A flightcrewmember waved two green-lit torches in the air back and forth, showing the pilots where to put the birds down. The Pelicans hovered slightly in the air above the landing pad, before finally settling down with a *thud*. The troop compartment bay opened up in one of the Pelicans. Torn and tired marines ragged out of the compartment, helping the heavily wounded who were not able to walk by themselves. Thousand mile stares were edged in some faces, while other saw signs of pain, their faces twisted in nasty grimaces. Medics followed and attended as best they could, ready to give treatment to those who needed it. Plasma burns were the most common injury, but here and there, a marine or two had suffered concussions or bone-breaks. The platoon and company officers followed, mostly looking intact. There were few of them left. The Elites, seemingly the only one's with some manner of tactical intelligence, had targetted the officers first knowing that the morale would drop tremendously should they be taken out. Their plan had almost worked.

When all marines had exited. Two giants, clad in metal, one grey and one olive appeared. The olive one sported a M6D pistol fastened on his right thigh and a SRS 99C-Sniper rifle, fastened on the magnetic clap on his back. The armor was full of bruises, mostly on the elbow

joints and knees, indicating much lying in wait on hard rocks and in uncomfortable environments. The grey one was partly covered in blue and purple blood, and black soot. His helmet visor was broken, and the armor looked dented near the chest. The giants exchanged some brief words with a sergeant, following him through the camp. Marines, crewmembers and even the officers, who had been barking orders for hours, stopped dead in their tracks. Their faces were easy to read. Some showed confusion, some shock, but mostly, they were full of relief. Some even had tears in their eyes. All activity halted. After a few moments, the officers were the first to come to their senses.

"What are you standing around there looking dumb for? Ain't ever seen Spartans before? Go help the wounded, on the double! Move!". A Sergeant barked. The marines on guard duty who had stood in orderly rows set off towards the pelican to help, exchanging smirks with each other. Those who had looked gloomy now looked full of life. Hope had arrived to the Halo ring.

One hour, 34 minutes earlier.

A hint of cheap standard brand UNSC cigarette smoke tainted the air inside the Command tent. Cups of coffee littered the tables and datapads lay everywhere. Organic paper in the UNSC, had been phased out in the early twenty fourth century, following the discovery of an asteroid field rich of resources and materials not commonly found elsewhere in known UNSC space. The environment was busy. The signalists and officers were as focused as they could be, acting untouched. They were weary, however, and worried. Ever since the 23rd battalion had made contact with the Covenant, the radio chatter had grown more frequent and disastrous as the hours and minutes had drifted by. The men and women of the 23rd were all veterans. Being a veteran did not, however, mean much in this time. If you had survived one engagement with the covenant, you were considered a veteran.

*I repeat, I repeat, we need immediate evac. We cannot hold this position! They're relentless! The captain has deserted! We need an evac!*

The signalists and senior officers monitoring the radios and comm devices gasped. Their eyes were fixed on the gray haired man standing in the middle of the tent, leaning over a holo-map.

Captain Keyes straightened himself and massaged his temple as he received the news. The Captain looked like a textbook example of how an officer should look. A white uniform with medals and marks of honour covered the left part of his chest. There were seemingly no speck of dirt on him. He had to look like a titan, and unmovable mountain, to his men. He had to be their base, stern and rock hard, so that the foundations do not falter. But that was only his exterior.

He was worried, worried for his men. He could understand the captain who had run away. But not forgive him. Never forgive. An officer had to be an example for the men, he had to be there, standing tall as hell closed in around him. He had to be the last off a battlefield. Not the first. Keyes knew the punishment for desertion. Keyes sat himself down on a foldable aluminium chair and closed his eyes before uttering his words.

"We do not send an evac until we absolutely have to." he said to noone and everyone. But mostly he said it to himself. The signalists and officers reluctantly returned to monitor their respective fields, waiting for more reports. Keyes' personal signalist passed the message by to the fighting men. Minutes passed by.

_*What? You can't be serious! They're pounding us! We're gonna die! We're gonna die! We're gonn-* _The line was suddenly cut off. Keyes understood what had happened to the signalist combatant. He mourned as another of his crew passed away. He started massaging his temple more frequently as the silence penetreated the tent. Suddenly the radio chatter came alive once more.

*Alpha Papa One, this is Sierra Bravo Two-Five-Zero. This is Sergeant Miller of Alpha Company. I' don't know how long we're gonna last but I.. what the..* _

Five minutes passed. Silence. Ten more, and nothing. All motion had seized inside the camp. The personnel exchanged looks. Keyes massaged his temple slower, and slower. And then five more minutes passed by, and the radio sparkled to life once more. Keyes opened his eyes.

*Alpha Papa One, this is Sierra Bravo Two-Five-Zero. You're not gonna believe this..* _

Now. _

The Spartans stepped inside of the Command tent and stood in salute before their senior officer, Captain Keyes.

"Sir! Spartan B-312 reporting for duty, Sir!"

"Sir! Spartan A-266 reporting for duty, Sir!"

He looked somewhat shocked. He could not still believe it. Believe that they had made it. Especially the grey one. Last he had seen him, he had without hesitation manned the Onager to give the _Pillar of Autumn_ and the _Package _a window off of Reach. He had believed almost every single Spartan had died there, on the former bastion of the UNSC.

_Noble Six, that was his callsign.. _Keyes remembered.

"At ease" Keyes said. The spartans relaxed slightly. "You would not believe how relieved I am to see you here, in one piece. Frankly, I still don't understand it. I didn't realize there were any Spartans who had escaped Reach. I believed you had all perished on that smoldering rock.. How.. How did you make it off?" he asked, with a touch of disbelief in his voice. Jun answered without hesitation.

"Sir. I was assigned on duty to escort Doctor Halsey off planet. We flew by pelican to a UNSC base, hidden beneath a mountain. I fullfilled my mission. Then I went back. I dislike leaving a fight, Sir." he stated in a raspy, quiet voice. Keyes felt calmed by even listening to it. He smiled at the Spartans' total disregard of his own safety. But he smiled also at his loyalty to his team member.

"Very well, Spartan. I'm glad to have you. What do I call you?" Keyes made it a standard to remember all of the names of those serving under his command.

"Jun, Sir." he said and responded with a salute.

Keyes fixed his eyes on the grey one. He noticed that the spartan sported a crack in the visor of his helmet. It hadn't been there when they last saw each other. "And you.. Last I saw you, you were making your way to the Onager to buy us a window to get off the planet.. I saw the plasma bombardment of AszÃ³d even from orbit.. How did you do it, son?"

"Well, Sir.." The grey one told his story, of how he had been outnumbered, of how he had been saved, of the flight to the Menachites, and the fight beneath the mountain and the teleportation. _I need to remember that last part, _Halsey would certainly be interested._ Keyes thought. He smiled once more, suddenly remembering how astonishing these spartans actually are.

"And what do I call you?"

"Six, Sir." he said and responded with a salute.

"Now don't get me wrong but from my understanding, Noble Team officially disassembled on Reach as most of the squad is assumed MIA. Technically, you Jun, is the only one of Noble still standing. Is that not correct?" Keyes asked curiously. He had understood why the Spartans assigned the MIA on each killed Spartan instead of KIA as the UNSC would suffer huge losses of morale with each Spartan dead.

"Sir, there are still _two_ members left." He gestured to Six. "And unless the covenant has other plans, we'd like to keep it that way untill the squad is completely killed off, sir." Jun answered.

"Very well, Lieutenant. Wouldn't have it any other way. I hereby, as commanding officer of UNSC forces on this godforsaken ring, reinstate Noble Team into active duty." Keyes said with a smile. "I'll see to it that Colonel Holland receives a message of your reinstation. You two have earned some rest, however. I want you ready for duty in 36 hours. Noble Six, we managed to bring extra parts for MJOLNIR armor with us as we had another Spartan onboard, see to it that you're outfitted with fresh parts, seeing as you have suffered some.. dents." Keyes noticed that the Spartans froze in confusion.

"Sir, if you don't mind me asking. Who is this Spartan?" Jun asked.

"It's Sierra-117" Keyes answered. Six and Jun looked at eachothers faceplates. They had heard of him before. Every Spartan had at one point. Few of the generation III's had seen him, though. '_One of the last II's.' _Jun thought.

"Now if that is all, you are dismissed." Keyes then said.

"Sir." Six and Jun responded simultaneously. They turned around and walked out of the tent. Keyes let out a sigh and allowed himself a brief chuckle, still caught up in the moment. He came to grips with the situation at hand almost immediately. The other's inside, had

not. "Gentlemen, don't you have a campaign to run?" Keyes asked out loud. Suddenly, the activity began once more.

Six entered the armory an hour or so after his and Jun's reporting to Captain Keyes, as ordered. Jun had decided to clean himself as well as his gear, as he had not been able to do so for a while. Racks after racks of spare standard marine and ODS armor rested against the walls of the armory. BR-55's, MA5B's and grenades were stocked in a small room together with the large pile of ammunition crates. There were not many people in the armory, as most of the battalions were deployed. Six picked up a Battle Rifle and examined it. It was in perfect condition. _The Pillar of Autumn_'s crew knew their stuff. After awhile, Six was met by a large man with brown hair and hazel eyes. He was not as large as Six clad in MJOLNIR armor. But he was close enough.

"Ah, wouldn't you look at that. Fancy seeing there are more of you out there. I thought almost all of you were dead by now. I'm Sergeant Aviles, at your service". Sergeant Aviles said in a merry tone as he left a hand for Six to shake. Six was surprised as the ease the Sergeant had with reaching out his hand. Most people thought it over once or twice before shaking hands with a Spartan.

"As close as they come." Six responded as he shook the Aviles' hand.

"Hah, yeah, yeah.. damn shame about Reach.. You know, I heard we did fairly well on the ground. But as countless times before, they just start glassing when we gain the upper hand. Ever seen one? I mean, a glassing?" Aviles asked curiously. Six stood dumbfounded. He had been _in _one.

"New Alexandria." Six said with strained voice. _'where we lost Cat..' _he thought solemnly.

"Oh, shit." Aviles muttered when he heard Six' answer. He took it as a cue not to continue conversation.

"Well, people always tell me I talk to much, and here I go again. And I suppose you're not here for the nonsense blurting out of my mouth. Come, I'll show you the spare parts." Aviles motioned for Six to follow. The walked through the long corridors of the armory. _'He didn't joke when he said he talks a lot' _Six thought to himself as he muted the sound of the merry weaponsmaster. The walk took them several minutes.

"And here we are" Aviles stated as they halted in front of a door. He tapped in several commands on the pad next to the door. After a few moments, it opened. Lights illuminated the otherwise gray room. Inside, it was any Spartan's wet dream. Several parts of spare armor in many variations stood in neat rows in large lockers with reinforced glass doors. Shoulder pads, chests and helmets littered the room. From the ceiling near the entrance hang mechanical arms. Six and Aviles entered.

"Now, let's get those parts off of you. Please, stand beneath the arms." Aviles gestured to the mechanical arms. Six knew what to do, he had been through this at least twice before. Once, when he had been presented with the Mark IV MJOLNIR armor shortly after the augmentation process, Project CHRYSANTEUM. And once again when he had

been ordered to Reach, to receive the Mark V. He strode to the designated spot and waited. The helmet he had already taken off and given to Aviles. The chest he could not remove by himself quickly enough, though. That was what the arms were for. Aviles set the helmet down on a metallic desk and brought up a datapad and typed in some commands. The mechanical arms woke to life and immediately started peeling off the upper torso and shoulder pads.

"You know, you should try and be more careful with the armor. Have you got any idea what these suits costs?" Aviles asked mockingly as the mechanical arms pulled the shoulder pads off. "Each suit is at least worth one battlegroup. And that is only the credit value. Don't even get me started on all the time and sweat it takes for scientists and engineers to actually start building one." The torso was pulled off by now as well, showing a heavily muscular upperbody partly covered in burns, scars and bruises. Aviles stared at the scars. "Hmm, tough life, huh?" Six turned his head and fixed his eyes on the older weaponsmaster.

"Tell that to the covenant." he responded in a monotone voice, his blue eyes fixed on the Sergeant. Aviles chuckled at the remark. The mechanical arms lay the broken armor parts gently in a pile next to the wall.

"Well, you should check out if you see anything you like. Or better yet, something that will save your hide from a good tanning by an Elite." Aviles chuckled by his remark. Six walked away to inspect the different armor components. He stopped in his tracks when he had found the helmet he was looking for, the Mark V[B] with extra armor on the top. He opened up the locker and removed the helmet and gave it to Aviles. Aviles nodded approvingly. He then went to the upper torso part of the armory and found the parts he was looking for, the standard torso as well as the Mark V shoulder pads. Satisfied, Six returned to the square beneath the mechanical arms and waited for Aviles to activate them. He started working immediately, and within minutes, Six was fully covered in MJOLNIR armor. It felt like a second skin to him.

"Well, that looks about right to me" Aviles stated as he examined the armor. Suddenly, the comms activated. Six and Aviles looked up at the speakers.

"Noble Six, Captain Keyes requests your presence immediately in the HQ." A young voice ordered.

"Thank you for the help." Six said to Aviles. Aviles nodded in return as Six made his way out of the room. He ran past technicians tending to vehicles and weapons lying in a pile as he made his way to the entrance area of the armory.

In two minutes he had crossed the entire FCP. He saw Jun standing nonchallantly, right outside of the tent. Jun had taken his helmet off, showing his bald head and tattooed arrows. "Hey" he said.

Jun opened his mouth.

"Don't know what's happened, but they are making some noise in there. We'd better get inside." Six nodded as they headed in.

Keyes discussed with someone on his personal communicator. The

Command tent had burst up, everyone stressing and trying desperately to type in commands on their data-pads. A holographic map showed the area of the front lines. Blue dots appeared seemingly at random on the map, as Keyes kept talking, overlooking it.

"Uh-huh, understood Cortana.. that's a shame.. wait, what kind of structures? Forerunner?.. all right, tell the Chief to continue the push, and search for more survivors, the structures will have to wait.. Inform him that Coldhammer will be inbound as you've found the remaining pods. Roger, good luck." Keyes ended the conversation, his hands placed at the sides of the map. His face looked grim. Six and Jun looked upon each other. Jun took the initiative.

"Sir" Jun said as he notified his presence. Keyes looked up. Both Spartans saluted their senior officer.

"At ease" Keyes said without returning the gesture. Keyes coiled his hand before talking.

"As you probably overheard from the conversation I had with Cortana, Master Chief's personal AI, we've found additional escape pods in the area near our frontier. Master Chief has found, so far, two groups of survivors out of four. That is not the only news, though. He has also found Forerunner structures scattered, seemingly at random. This is hardly surprising, as we believe this ring is a forerunner structure itself. What is surprising, however, is that in and around each of these structures, we have also encountered the Covenant. Even at the structures without no seemingly tactical or strategic value at all.." He paused.

"Forerunner? Like on Reach?" Jun asked Six. Six shrugged. Keyes grimaced and opened his mouth once more.

"Precisely, Spartan. Cortana believes that the Forerunner holds these structures in high regard in their religion. That is not all, however. They seem to be looking for something. This is where you come in. I'm sorry to quit your free-time short, but I have a mission. A mission only soldiers with your special.. skills can perform." Keyes paused. The Spartans straightened themselves. "I need you two to find out what it is the Covenant is searching for, I want you to grab it before they do, and I want you to return it to the UNSC. This may be vital to the war effort, and it is a no failure option. This is your main objective. Your secondary objective is to neutralise any hostile forces you encounter, if there is no way around them. This will smooth things out for the marines. Understood?" Keyes asked.

"Sir!" Six shouted and saluted. Jun followed suit.

"That's what I like to hear. You have free hands on this mission. A pelican will be waiting for you. I have assigned it to you as your personal transport. Grab ammo and rations. You're going to need it. Dismissed!" He stated and saluted. Six and Jun turned on their heels and walked out of the tent.

To be honest, Six looked forward to this mission. He was used to being kept in motion. Not that the last week or so had been dull, far from it.

It just felt good to be under command once more.

10. Classified

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****Chapter 10. Classified****

****August 18, 2547****

The man was now sixteen.

****Location: Classified.****

****02:42 Standard Earth Time.****

The large, deep gray armor with metallic blue details left little reflection in space. A tiny sandcorn in a beach of spacerocks and debris. On the right side of the chest piece was a symbol of the NavSpecWep, an eagle holding arrows in one claw, and a lightning bolt in the other. Next to the symbol was a name, and the name read: _B-312._ And the Spartan was drifting aimlessly through space. Around him, debris from an exploding spaceship several kilometers away gathered, plowing its way through space, never to be hindered unless something blocked its way. The same could be said for the Spartan.

The armor was damaged. A dent was positioned where the radiotransmitter were supposed to be. The Spartan had not yet realised it, though, as he could still receive chatter and hails. The noise worried him. URF, the _United Rebel Front_, was in an uproar as their precious cargo had been destroyed. The rage was mixed with panic as they wondered where the saboteurs where. And how the UNSC knew of them. Their remaining leadership had decided to dispatch search and rescue ships along with escorts to the general area of the explosion, in hope of salvaging something, _anything_. They had been given orders and instructions to hurry, as the UNSC were sure to arrive. The URF ships had not arrived yet, but the Spartan knew it was only a matter of time. And he knew that the UNSC did not know where he was. Or even if he had completed the mission. He had sent numerous messages, but none had responded. His own voice echoed in his helmet as he continued to drift through space, surrounded by the debris, his oxygen running out second by second.

"UNSC _The Dark Knight, this is Sierra Bravo-Three-One-Two, please respond." _No response._ "_UNSC _The Dark Knight, this is Sierra Bravo-Three-One-Two, Priority Objective accomplished, requesting pick-up, over." _

* * *

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****August 16, 2547****

****Onboard the ONI Prowler _The Dark Knight, _UNSC space****

****Briefing Room.****

"Gentlemen, this is a Shiva nuclear bomb. As you all know, it is one of the most powerful and advanced weapons we have in our arsenal. And right now, the URF has gotten their hands on one of 'em." The highranking female ONI officer explained as she pointed to the large object in the hologram. She was de facto the highest ranking officer in the room, as stated by the ONI section who authorised the mission. She was also very beautiful, even for being in her mid fifties. ONI usually handpicked their female personnel taking into review both their looks and their service record, as it usually has a psychological effect on men to listen to beautiful women.

In the small briefing room there sat and stood a total of four men and one woman. Everyone one of them was wearing some manner of dark clothes, as befitting the crew of a ONI Prowler. They were old as well, which is typical for high ranking officers, especially ones on secret missions. ONI usually picked older personnel, as they knew how to keep a secret. They didn't feel the need to impress on friends when drinking, nor telling wild stories when trying to get a girl. Mostly, these old ones didn't have friends.

One of them stood out from the bunch, though, as he was far younger, muscular and larger. He did not have any medals covering his chest, only two bars showing his grade as a Lieutenant of the Navy, and a callsign, B-312. The hologram suddenly shifted to a logistics ship, over 1 km long, it's name clearly detailed on it's side.

"This is the UNSC Stock and Supply. It is believed the Insurrectionists gained control of this vessel, carrying everything from small arms to weapons of mass destruction onboard, on it's way to the front lines. Naturally, the news of this has been kept in the dark so as to not lose morale." One of the old men raised his right hand. He had a silver-gray beard, blue, tired eyes and a small scar on his left cheek. "Yes, Colonel", the woman, slightly irritated, interrupted her monologue to hear the Colonel out.

"Ma'am, let me get this straight. One logistics ship, vital to the war effort, was captured by Insurrectionists, in the middle of an heavily armed convoy." The ONI officer nodded. "Tell me, how in all the hells was this possible?" He received nods from the other older officers. The young man sat silent and emotionless.

"Well, Colonel. As I was just about to explain, before you interrupted me." She sent an angry gaze towards the Colonel, who recoiled. "It is believed that a small number of Insurrectionists had infiltrated the ship for years, awaiting the right moment to strike and gain control of the ship. They finally received their moment to strike when the convoy received a general distress from a broken ship in the area. Two ships, in the immediate vicinity of the logistics ship, broke ranks to respond. It is believed the Insurrectionists striked immediately and killed the entire crew. We do not know that they are KIA, though. They may very well be alive and will be kept as a bargaining chip. In any case, the ship jumped to Slipspace on a random vector as soon as they were able. This happened two months ago and we have had no sign of them since-" The ONI officer let it all sink in as she paused for a sip of water from one of the glasses on the table. The older officers looked astonished from all the information they had received, while the Spartans face was giving nothing away. He instead watched the ONI officer intensely. She continued. "-Until two weeks ago when a UNSC F-365 Probe, a scout, if you will, to tell if Covenant approaches this particular area of

space, picked the logistics ship up. Somehow, ONI got it's hand on the signal transmitted by the probe, and ordered it to follow the ship. The ship led us to a small asteroid." She flickered with her finger and a holographic map of the outlining of the asteroid displayed. Antennas, large gates and weapons adorned the surface of it. "As you can see, this is clearly one of the Insurrectionist bases. Gustavus, if you will." She suddenly said, seemingly to no one.

"Of course, Commander Stone." An artificial voice responded with a burly, swedish dialect. An AI flickered to life next to her, a large fat man richly dressed as the ancient Swedish warrior king, Gustavus II Adolphus, all covered in the usual blue tone of an AI. "Greetings to you all" The AI said to the men and bowed. The men nodded their heads in turn. Commander Stone, angered, exclaimed: "Drop the act Gustavus, and get on with the briefing."

"Of course, Commander Stone. Apologies. Gentlemen, intelligence suggests, judging by the size of the asteroid, that there may be as many as five thousand rebels inside. Of course, we have no way of knowing, but to our estimates, at least a tenth of them are trained and equipped, judging by an old report of a raid on another asteroid two decades back. And unless they have shipped away the majority of the weapons they stole, they have an armory that rivals that of a small UNSC garrison. As well as a nuclear bomb."

"Thank you Gustavus." The AI nodded and disappeared. "And this is where our residential Spartan comes in, on loan from Colonel Holland." The men's eyes turned to the Spartan. "This is Lieutenant of the Navy, Spartan B-312, a specialist on stealth and assassination. He is also considered a Hyper Lethal Vector, which for you who do not understand, means that he is a very dangerous man." Commander Stone let it sink in as the men looked at one another. "He is to undertake this mission, alone." One of the male officers immediately raised his hand. "Yes, Major." She said as she pointed to the beardless, black man with energetic eyes. "Ma'am, why alone? Surely the odds at succeeding the mission would be greater if we sent in a team of ODSs with him."

"While that is true in any other circumstance, Major, ODSs aren't really known for their stealth. They tend to make a.. mess, when they're deployed. No, A team of five will fly with the Lieutenant, infiltrate the base, and then be on standby, ready to assist the Lieutenant should the need arise." The Major nodded. "The Lieutenant and the ODSs are to be inserted into the asteroid by a stealthed Pelican. It will halt at an appropriate distance, where the team will then jump with the help of thruster packs. Gustavus has located several weak points in the asteroid exterior, such as waste disposal pipes, etc. This will be your way in. Exfil will be done by the same way you came in. The ODSs have already been informed of this." Areas became highlighted on the holographic map. "Now, Objectives are as follows. Priority Objective is to disable the nuclear bomb. This will be done by removing the firing codes from the nuclear warhead. You will be given a fragment of Gustavus for this. Normally we would simply detonate the bomb, but whatever we like it or not, the people inside are still part of the UNSC. Secondary Objectives, eliminate URF leadership should an opportunity present itself and locate the eventual survivors of the _Stock and Supply. _ETA for liftoff is 09:30. Is that understood, Lieutenant?"

"Understood Ma'am" The Spartan responded with a neutral voice. The other officers were astounded that it sounded so normal, as if it could belong to anyone and not a professional killing machine.

"Good." Commander Stone said. "Everything clear?" The men nodded. "Good, dismissed." The men rose up and left the briefing room, muttering amongst themselves. The Spartan followed close behind. He decided to go to the gym, in order to ease his mind for the upcoming mission. The Prowler wasn't a very large ship, and he reached the gym in only some minutes. He stood by the door and placed his palm on the panel next to the door. The panel read his hand, and the doors hissed open. He entered. Several men were already inside and they turned their heads to look at the new arrival. The Spartan nodded to them as he walked to the bench press. The men were muscular. They wore combat fatigues and tank tops and stood in a ring, sparring with each other. The Spartan glanced at them, and thought they were moving slowly. Slow, for a Spartan at least. He decided to add some extra weight to the bench press as only 100 kg was on it. He decided that 200 kg would suffice for now. He lay down on the bench, took a firm grip of the bar, and lifted it, up and down. One of the men watching the others spar glanced at the Spartan. His eyes became wider. He hailed the others so that they would watch as well. The Spartan was not bothered. After a few reps, he decided to increase the weight. He added 75 kg to the bar, lay down, and lifted it up and down again. This time, he felt the weight. He noticed that the men talked to themselves, and one of them came over. The Spartan ended what he was doing, and sat up, looking at the man. The man was ugly. He was tall, almost as tall as the Spartan. He had a shaved head, an ugly scar on his right cheek, deep set eyes and a brown moustache. He looked to be in his thirties.

"Name and Rank." The man stated. The Spartan looked at his eyes. He looked irritated. He decided to respond.

"Lieutenant of the Navy, Spartan B-312." He decided not to say Sir, as he did not know if he was in the company of a higher ranking officer. The man's facial features turned from irritated to mildly amused.

"Figures." The man responded.

"Figures what?" The Spartan wondered.

"That they decided not to give you a name, _Sir_" The man almost spat the last word.

The Spartan wondered what he had done to evoke hostility from the man. He could not honestly say. Giving his code is proper conduct for a Spartan.

"I'm Sergeant Rushmore, 105th ODST Division. These are my boys, Charlie, Arnold, Tristan and Mike. Looks like we're going to be working together."

"Yes. I look forward to it, Sergeant. I'm going to prepare for the mission." The Spartan said as he was about to leave. He felt that he could gain nothing but further resentment, and thus compromising the mission if he remained longer. The ODSTs remained silent as he stepped out of the gym. He could hear mutterings, calling him a

"freak" and the like, thanks to his enhanced hearing. He wasn't bothered. While he did not understand the resentment the ODS'Ts had towards Spartans in general, he chose not to respond to them. They were not the enemy. They were not the ones who had burned down his home, his family and his entire planet. They were not the enemy.

The Spartan said this to himself as a sort of chanting as he made his way towards his room. He placed the palm of his hand onto the scanning device next to the door and the door hissed open. He thought that the bed looked inviting, and slept.

****August 17, 2547****

****Onboard the ONI Prowler _The Dark Knight_, UNSC space****

****Hangar Bay****

****07:30 Standard Earth Time****

The Spartan received help by two of the hangar bay technicians with his MJOLNIR Mk. IV. He could have put it on himself, but it would take much longer time. And he felt eager to wear his secondary skin. He felt no embarrassment as he stood entirely nude on the cold titanium floor in a small room, similar to Da Vinci's _The Perfect Man_. The technicians had instructions in their hands in which order and how the separate parts of the armour were to be mounted. After fifteen minutes, and several pointers from the Spartan, the technicians had finished. Only the helmet remained, which he kept in his hands, the visor facing him. He saw his own reflection in it and noticed the crystal blue eyes, courtesy of the augmentation process, staring back at him. He still had not gotten used to their colour. "Sir?" he heard. He faced the source of the voice. "Sir, we're all set, you're good to go." The Spartan nodded and gave his thanks. He stepped out of the small room and entered the main hangar area.

He noticed the group of ODS'Ts who would accompany him checking their weapons and several technicians scurrying around the stealthed Pelican, trying to find malfunctions and hopefully fixing them. The hangar bay wasn't very large, considering it shared its area with the onboard armory. There was only room for two Pelicans, a few mines and some probes. The rest, spare parts, technicians and the works was cramped together. The small arms section of the hangar bay lay directly opposite of the Pelicans, and he made his way there. The Spartan considered what weapons he needed for the mission. He took into account that this was in fact mainly a stealth mission, so he would only need precision weapons, such as the DMR. Then he took in the fact that should he be detected, he needed something to shoot his way out, and instead opted for the MA5K, the carbine version of the MA5 assault rifle. The carbine, which he had been trained with on Onyx, had a much smaller profile and was harder to detect than the larger standard assault rifle. He also chose the M6C with a mounted silencer, as well as two grenades. His customised knife was strapped to his chest, as always. He gazed towards the ODS'Ts and noticed they had chosen to go for overkill. Not surprising, he realised, as they would be the ones to get him out should he be compromised. He only hoped they remembered that part. He quickly dismissed these thoughts, as he knew the ODS'Ts wouldn't dismiss a chance to show their value. He overheard two of them talking to each other.

"You're sure you've got enough firepower, Jacobi?" One of the ODS'Ts

said to his teammate.

"What?" Jacobi responded with a dumb expression, obviously fixed on the machine-gun he was double-checking.

"You deaf as well as dumb? I said that you're packing a shitload of weapons." the other ODS'T said, in a slightly irritated voice.

"Who you calling dumb, Smith? I'm the heavy weapons specialist, asshole." He said as he gently touched the SPNKR, admiring it. "Besides, if the Spartan fucks up, we sure as hell gonna need it."

"Hear, hear." Smith said as if Jacobi had said something particularly educated. This evoked laughter from two other ODS'Ts. Sergeant Rushmore cut in.

"Shut your pieholes, kids! We're about to go on a mission, and you sit here cracking jokes? If it's not about the mission, then Keep. That. Mouth. Shut! You wanna show these Spartans the ODS'Ts are the finest in the UNSC? Then be professional! You're Helljumpers, act like it! Do I make myself clear?!"

"Sir, yes sir!" the group of ODS'Ts quickly responded.

"Good, check your weapons again, make sure everything is in working order, and we're all going to make it back here alive. Carry on."

The Spartan quickly revised his opinion of the Sergeant and started seeing him with more respect.

Suddenly he heard the large doors of the hangar hiss open and saw Commander Stone with a determined gaze walking in, together with the Colonel from yesterday's briefing. The Colonel was holding a small device with a faint blue glow. They were walking towards the ODS'Ts. The Spartan quickly acted, as per military protocol aboard an UNSC ship and announced their arrival.

"Officers on deck!" He shouted as he immediately stood to attention. The ODS'Ts quickly caught on and in no time at all, despite literally having weapons all over themselves, stood to attention as well.

"At ease" Commander Stone dismissed. She had walked the fairly long distance between the hangar doors and the ODS'Ts in a surprisingly short amount of time, the Spartan noticed. "Lieutenant, join us please." He sprinted over to the group.

"Sergeant Rushmore" Commander Stone addressed.

"Ma'am?" The large Sergeant straightened himself up.

"Is your team ready?" She asked rather nonchalantly.

"Ma'am, we're good to go. Though, we still haven't received the thruster packs." The other ODS'Ts nodded.

"The technicians have just finished checking them through for malfunctions, and are probably on their way over here as we speak. Don't worry about it." The Sergeant nodded. She turned to look

towards the Spartan.

"Lieutenant, the device which the good Colonel is holding in his hands is, as you've probably already deducted, a fragment of Gustavus. It will help you should you find a door locked. More importantly, it will also, as I stated in the briefing, destroy the firing sequence of the Shiva bomb. It is absolutely vital nothing happens to it, is that understood?"

"Affirmative, Ma'am." The Spartan replied. The Colonel handed the fragment to him, which he placed in the compartment on his back, well protected hidden away beneath centimeters of titanium steel. The technicians suddenly arrived and started handing out thruster packs with a built-in oxygen supply. The pack fitted perfectly on his back. When the ODSs and the Spartan were finished, Commander Stone started speaking, this time towards everybody.

"Listen up. It is imperative that the priority objective is a success. Every minute that Shiva is in rebel hands, the possibility of millions of dead colonials exist. I will not let that happen on my watch. Do I make myself clear?" She asked.

"Yes Ma'am!" The squad chorused. She nodded in return, as if telling the squad they were dismissed and good to go. The ODSs packed their things together and started entering the Pelican. The Spartan followed them closely behind, holding his MA5K Carbine with both hands.

"Lieutenant." He suddenly heard coming from behind. He turned his head.

Commander Stone stood there, now alone. She opened her mouth and said:

"Lieutenant, I expect this mission to be nothing less than a success. Millions of lives depend on it."

The Spartan blinked, put on his Mark IV[B] helmet and said "Don't worry ma'am, we'll get it done". And then he entered the Pelican.

Well, this was fun. Expect more awesomeness to arrive shortly. Sorry for taking such a long time, but my motivation had dissappeared. It's back again. Sorry for making a short chapter again(even though it's the longest I've written), but I felt the chapter was finished there and then.

It's not really weird that Six is infiltrating the base by himself. I mean, judging from the little we know of him, he's excellent at stealth and killing without making a sound. Remember Nightfall in Reach?

For every chapter, and after every review, my writing skills improve, as well as my grammar. So this is not only for your entertainment, but also practice for me.

_Also, I felt the story moved quite quickly, and decided to set a slower pace. I mean, if I kept on as I did earlier, the war would be finished in no time at all. If Six survives the war. We'll see
=)_

Also, I'm surprised noone's reacted that I haven't named Six yet.

See you again in a not so far away future.

11. Classified II

*Disclaimer* I don't own Halo, except for the characters I've created for this story.

****Chapter 11. Classified II.****

****August 17, 2547****

****Location: Classified****

****09:47, Standard Earth Time****

There was next to no chatter inside the tight compartment of the Pelican. All that could be heard was the silent hum of the engines and weapons clattering. The only source of light was tinted red. The mood was heavy. The Spartan stood at the very rear, right next to the rear hatch, seemingly deep in thought. The ODSTs all wore their helmets, with polarized visors, effectively rendering them faceless. Sergeant Rushmore could easily be made out as the man in charge of the small team of ODSTs, as he sported a red stripe on top of his helmet, as well as on his chest armor. He sat down next to one of the other ODSTs, Smith, if the Spartan recalled correct. Suddenly the sergeant stood. Nobody paid him much attention. Some gave him curious glances, but other than that, nobody seemed to even acknowledge the sergeant.

"Listen up." He said as to draw attention. Everyone tilted their heads towards him, curiously. "We do this by the book, and no one will be harmed. We are on pick-up duty for the good Lieutenant here, so don't fall asleep. Even if it is a boring duty to wait, it is still our duty. Should the shit hit the fan, you will need to be prepared. We've all fought the innies before, and they are not to be underestimated. Stay awake, and stay alive. Lieutenant?" He exclaimed as he looked directly at the Spartan.

"Yes, Sergeant?" He responded.

"Should something go wrong, don't hesitate. Signal us immediately and we will respond. We may not be spartans, but we're tougher than we look. Ain't that right boys?" The ODSTs responded with a hurrah.

The Spartan contemplated, and then responded by a nod. The Sergeant nodded in return as he was just about to sit down.

The pilot suddenly drew the attention towards the cockpit.

"Right, everyone, this is it. We have a full view of the asteroid, approximately five hundred meters away. I will remain at this distance for as long as I can. Hold on to your helmets as the hatch is opening." The signal lights next to the rear hatch flared. "Opening rear hatch. Good hunting, boys." The pilot shut the door to the cockpit. The hatch opened, and a sudden roar engulfed the rear

compartment. Everything not strapped in or magnetically attached to something would get sucked out. Nothing did, however. The Spartan turned around, and gazed upon the blackness of space. Small dots of light could be seen in the distance, as well as the large asteroid that houses the rebels. Other than that, nothing. The Spartan opened up the comms.

"Everyone, on my mark." The ODSTs filed in behind him in two columns, and made ready. The Spartan waited for ten seconds.

"Mark." He magnetically disattached from the floor and jumped out. He activated his thruster pack, and flew towards the asteroid. He looked up behind him, and saw that some of the ODSTs were already out, following him. The Spartan was impressed with how well they handled zero-g. They handled it far better than he did.

Zero-g was a pain. Every marine and navy personnel in the UNSC had completed the Zero-g training with varying success. It was disorientating to say the least, where up suddenly became down, and vice-versa. While the Spartan had received extra training in Zero-g, as well as the ODSTs, he was no expert. No one was. He could only remember what his instructors taught him, and rely on it as well as his training. The ODSTs, however, looked like they had done this their entire lives.

He kept a straight course towards the asteroid, only making some minor corrections with the thruster pack. A small serpentine of six humans floating in space, towards a large rocky object would look odd in any other circumstance, the Spartan thought to himself. "_No, focus on the mission." _He set his head straight. They were almost there.

"Radio silence." He ordered. He did not want to risk the rebels catching any communications.

Now, as he was closer to the asteroid, he only needed to find the insertion points. Otherwise known as waste disposal pipes. After some searching, with Gustavus' limited help, various points became highlighted on his visor, indicating the pipes in a blue tone together with the approximate distance. He had found what he was looking for. He turned slightly towards the nearest ODST, and pointed towards the pipes. The ODST looked towards where he was pointing, and nodded. He then turned and directed his nearest comrade, who repeated it to the one nearest him, and so on. When the Spartan made sure that everyone knew where they were heading, he set off. He steered towards the rocky outlining next to the pipes. After some additional minor corrections, he made contact with the rocky exterior, and immediately found something to grab hold of. He waited for the ODSTs to do the same. Nearly everyone made it on the first try. Everyone except for Jacobi, who bumped into the rock, only to float away from it. Sergeant Rushmore who was near him, immediately grabbed hold of his leg and drew him back. Jacobi, who had found something to grab, thanked the sergeant with limited hand motions. Meanwhile, the Spartan had made his way towards the pipes by 'climbing'. He helped himself up by holding on to one of the pipes. He examined it, and noticed how large it was. The entire team could easily fit into it. The ODSTs had climbed their way over to him, as well. He motioned to them to follow his lead, as he began to climb the short pipe. He made his way up to the top, steadied himself, and then threw himself down into the asteroid.

Everyone had done the same, and they now stood by a large, titanium reinforced gate that had abruptly ended their progress. There was no keypad or device to insert Gustavus into, in order to hack the gate open. The Spartan stood there, contemplating on what to do next. He gazed at the door, examining it. He realized they couldn't blow the gate open, as the explosion would surely be heard by someone and alert the whole base. Not to mention the vacuum that would potentially engulf and suck whatever was inside out to space. While examining it, he found a small slit in the middle. It was just enough for his fingers to grasp. He motioned to the ODSTs to get near him, while he steadied himself. He grasped the slit with both hands, and began pulling the gate open with brute force. Even with his augmented strength, and even with the MJOLNIR armor, it was heavy. He initially only managed to open it a few centimeters. But then, a weak clank could be heard, unnoticeable by regular hearing. But with the enhanced sound amplifier of the Mark IV[B] helmet, the spartan barely made it out, and acted. He used every ounce of his strength, and the gate opened centimeter by centimeter. When it was just enough for him to pass, he slid halfway through with inhuman speed, and immediately placed himself in the middle of it to more effectively use his strength. He pushed with his back and his legs, enough to give room for the ODSTs. He couldn't see their faces, but he knew they were impressed. He motioned with his head to them to get inside. They quickly caught on and rushed in. The Spartan slowly slid inside, while still holding the gate open, not daring to use any sudden movements. He let go of the gate, which immediately shut. He shouldered his weapon, to join the ODSTs who already had began clearing the large room they now were in.

The room, or facility, was, as the Spartan had guessed, a large waste and recycling centre. It was as big as the hangar of the _The Dark Knight. _No humans could be seen, as the entire facility seemed to be automated. Piles of waste lay scattered around, providing excellent cover for the ODSTs, should they need it. The Spartan marvelled at the lack of security. But he quickly came to the conclusion that nobody would try to enter the way they had done.

"Radio communications enabled." He said.

"Roger that. Sound on people." Sergeant Rushmore ordered. "Looks like we've got artificial gravity in here. We must be in the base interior." he notified.

"Agreed." The Spartan added.

"Jesus fucking christ, that was awesome!" Smith suddenly shouted excitedly. "Sarge, promise me we do more of these crazy fucked up ONI missions!"

"There won't be a next time for you if you don't shut your god damn mouth, private." Sergeant Rushmore calmly stated with a tone only found in marine officers. Smith instantly obeyed his superior, though it was clear he was still excited.

"Lieutenant, found a door." one of the ODSTs notified. The Spartan made his way to where the ODST stood. A keypad was positioned to the left of the door, the screen displaying a red key symbol. He unplugged the blue toned crystal fragment which held Gustavus from his helmet, and inserted it into the port beneath the keypad. In less

than a second, the screen on the keypad blinked green, indicating the door opening.

"Sergeant Rushmore, over here." The Spartan ordered. The sergeant jogged to his position and took cover by the door. He motioned for the ODSs to take cover and hide as he moved near the wall, rifle at the ready. They both carefully looked outside. And what they saw amazed them.

The Insurrectionists had built a small fortress of a city in the hollowed out asteroid, complete with roads and tall buildings. An artificial sun basked the entire city in sunlight. He could see buildings adjacent with the walls, which he guessed manned the cannons and relays on the exterior of the asteroid, as well as worked as housing. People, both civilians and insurrectionists moved around freely, dealing with every day life. Directly opposite of the waste and recycling centre stood the tallest building, at least twice as tall as the others. To the west there was a large docking bay, full of transport ships and smaller spacecrafts. Docking bay personnel were busy unloading and loading crates and machinery all over the bay. What stood out the most from the ships, though, was the UNSC Stock & Supply, nearly covering the entire docking bay. The personnel was busy unloading it's haul. He zoomed in and caught a glimpse of the writing on the side of a two meter long crate. It was the Shiva nuke. The crate was finished being loaded onto a large gray truck. The vehicle immediately took off when the bay personnel had finished loading. He zoomed in further on the truck, following it with his eyes. It disappeared behind a few buildings. But he had already guessed it's heading. The tall building.

"Sergeant, you saw the truck?" He asked.

"Yeah. It's heading towards that tower over there." The sergeant responded and nodded towards the tall building. "What about it?" The sergeant asked.

"Inside the truck is the primary objective, and it's heading towards their central command, if I've guessed correctly. They probably keep the captured crewmen either there or-" he pointed towards the docking bay "-there." The sergeant depolarized his visor, his battered face revealing a shocked expression.

"Well, Lieutenant, that complicates things." Sergeant Rushmore pointed out, receiving a nod by the Spartan.

"At least I now know where the Shiva is located." After a quick glance, he shut the door. "Sergeant, I will need you and your men to hold this position. Keep hidden and stay ready. I will either come back here, or I will call for your aid should it be needed. I will constantly update on my progress. Should the worst happen to me, retreat towards the Pelican, and call for reinforcements. Understood?"

"Understood." The sergeant responded. The Spartan liked the Sergeant. He reminded him of Chief Mendez.

"Good, move out." he ordered. The sergeant turned towards his men and directed their firing positions. The Spartan, however, opened the door and stepped outside.

He kept a low profile as he moved through the narrow corridors between densely packed, low buildings. He tried to stay in the shade as much as possible, and whenever he heard voices he would stop, and listen. Gustavus had created a constantly updating map from what the Spartan had seen and still see, not unlike the ODSRs VISR overhead map, which he consulted from time to time. He assumed he was in the industrial district of the city, as tight corridors, low in height, wide buildings and the low population made it apparent. He was crossing into one of the tight, dark corridors, hoping no one would turn up and block his way.

****Private James Miller, URF****

James was weary. He had been walking the same street exactly fifteen times in his current shift. He had been assigned long shifts at his work as a guard for one of the factories of the asteroid he currently called his home. He had known it would be a boring job, but not like this. At least he had something to look forward to. He was in his mid thirties, with a wife at home and a child on it's way.

He wasn't born in the asteroid. Almost no one currently calling it home was. He was originally from a small city in a nonimportant outer colony. He was certain the UEG and UNSC had forgotten the colony even existed, or that they even cared about it even if they knew it existed. Some who cared, however, was the URF.

In his late teens representatives of the URF had come to his small city, looking for men and women, willing to enlist to a faction that cared about them, and acknowledged their existence. Not many of the people in his city was patriotic, especially not the teenagers. He immediately signed up, not even consulting his family. Sure, he had heard about stuff the URF had done. Suicide bombings, murder, etc. But those had been directed at people in charge, not the regular folks.

The service had been uneventful, except for when he met his future wife. They had both been stationed at the asteroid at the end of their respective services. He had taken up a job as a guardsman, while she worked in a office in the middle of the city. He hated his job, and all he wanted right now was to come home to his wife, and give her a hug.

*Snikt*

That was the last sound James Miller ever heard as the knife impaled his throat.

****Lieutenant of the Navy, Spartan B-312****

He felt bad for the guardsman he had killed. From what he could tell about his uniform, this man hadn't been an Insurrectionist soldier. He had been hired by one of the local factories to guard the area. A victim, who by unfortunate means, had been at the wrong spot at the wrong time. There had been ways to incapacitate him, but the Spartan felt that the knife would be the most soundless and efficient one, in order to reach his target. One life to spare a million. He crouched down, wiped the blade on the guardsmans shirt, and continued through the city.

"Gustavus, mark the tower on my HUD together with a distance

calculator." The Spartan ordered the limited AI.

"Certainly, Lieutenant." He did as he was ordered, 0.25 seconds slower than an ONI classed AI would usually need to complete such a mundane task.

The tower became highlighted on his HUD, a weak yellow outlining amidst dark buildings. He checked the distance. 850 meters. '_Not far now_', he told himself, this time now more excited and his mind more sharpened. As he was nearing the tower, he noticed how much larger the buildings became. The city seemed to have been built as if the tallest buildings were in the middle, and the smallest ones on the outskirts, aside from the factories. Much like an old medieval fortress on Earth. He also noticed more humans. Armed humans. As it was, he had to rely on all his skills in stealth and agility just to stay out of sight, and decrease the amount of noise he made. The sudden appearance of a large number of armed soldiers didn't help him. He took no more risks and chances further on. One mistake, and it could be costly. And not just for him.

With a skill few could display in the art of stealth, he had reached the tower. Squad sized patrols moved around the streets and people were rushing in and out of the building. There was no building connected to the tower, nor any bridge. The Spartan couldn't see any entrance where he would avoid detection. He laid himself flat on the ground, waiting for an opportunity. He decided it was about time to notify Sergeant Rushmore of his progress, and perhaps ask for some aid.

****Sergeant Rushmore, 105th Helljumpers.****

His men had taken up the positions he had given them, as ordered by the Lieutenant. His men was the best ODSs he ever had the pleasure of working with. Even Smith. He had hundreds of reasons to be proud of them. Not that he displayed it. Doing so might break discipline.

He wondered how far the Spartan had come. He had not heard any gunfire yet, so the sergeant assumed he must have done something right. He had worked with Spartans before. Great, green armored hulking beasts. Mostly they had kept to themselves, achieving their goals no matter what stood in the way. The ODSs didn't like them. They didn't respect them. Not since being degraded from the best humanity had to offer to a lousy second place, and certainly not after the 'gymnasium incident', where a spartan trainee killed four ODSs with his bare hands. Only because he was commanded to. He had shown no remorse, no regret at all.

They were freaks. Every single last one of them.

But, the Lieutenant seemed to be different from the ones he had previously met, somehow. Certainly, he was a spartan super soldier, but at the same time, he seemed to be similar to the ODSs. It's as if the two breeds of soldiers had merged into one. And when he had seen him in the gym, lifting hundreds of kilos of weight like it was nothing, he had looked so young. Far younger than the amount of time the spartans had been around. Suddenly, the comms crackled. The Sergeant answered.

****Lieutenant of the Navy, Spartan B-312****

"I repeat, I have no way inside. Not sure how long I'm going to avoid detection. It's getting crowded out here." The Spartan said, trying to remain as professional as possible.

"Roger. Any orders?" The sergeant asked.

"Affirmative. Mission parameters changed. Create a distraction and draw their attention." The Spartan responded. "Preferrably the explosive kind" He added.

"Acknowledged. How big?" the Sergeant responded with a grin.

"Big. Sierra B-312 out." the Spartan shut down his radio. Now, he waited.

****43 minutes later.****

The large explosion engulfed the entire factory building that came crashing down in mere seconds. The large fireball could be seen from the entire city and the loud boom shook the windows of the nearby buildings. The MJOLNIR armor automatically decreased the noise as the soundwaves streaked across the city. The Spartan monitored the Insurrectionists and saw their shocked and frightened expressions. An officer was quick to react, and immediately sent most of the Insurrectionists guarding the tower entrance towards the explosion. He left a handful of men to remain at the tower as he took off together with his men. The remaining squad grouped together and from their body language, they did not know what to do about the current situation. That was the Spartans cue as he struck. He darted out of his hiding place towards the nearest Insurrectionists, a few meters away.

Being hit by a speeding vehicle will break most of the bones in your body, if you're not lucky and get killed immediately. Being hit by a spartan in full sprint head on, covered entirely in half a ton of MJOLNIR armor feels roughly the same. The soldier was dead before he hit the ground. The remaining few were slow to react to his sudden appearance. The Spartan took full advantage of the situation. He brandished his knife and slashed one soldier across the throat. He then grasped him and threw him into their squad leader, while he spun around with the knife in a reverse grip, impaling another soldier through the skull. He quickly pulled it out and threw it towards a dumbfound soldier who had just realised he carried a rifle. He tried to bring it up to his shoulder, only to lose all strength as the knife hit him in the chest right at the heart, and he fell. The squad leader tried to get up, but he was quickly apprehended by the Spartan, who broke his neck. With no gun shot fired, and in all in all ten seconds, the Spartan had taken down the squad. He retrieved his knife, and entered the tower. He opened up his comms.

"I am inside the tower, I repeat, I am inside the tower. Priority objective nearby. Thank you for the distraction, over." The Spartan notified Sergeant Rushmore.

"Roger that, we aim to please. Out." Sergeant Rushmore said. The Spartan could clearly hear Smith in the background giggling.

The Spartan deactivated his communications and found a terminal in which he inserted Gustavus. Gustavus in turn downloaded the entire

schematics of the tower directly into the Spartans HUD. He retrieved the AI, and continued, this time sprinting. Now he knew where the Shiva was, together with the missing crewmen.

He raced past the corridors and stairs. The HUD told him the Shiva nuclear bomb, his priority objective, was positioned at the research/engineering floor, at level fifteen. He was now at the tenth. The missing crewmen's position had shifted from being nearby his position, to disappearing entirely. He wanted to help them in some way, but the priority objective came first. In Camp Currahee, at Onyx, Lieutenant Commander Ambrose had specifically taught them, the Spartans of Beta, to always think of the bigger picture. This was what he did. All the time. He would only help the crewmembers should they appear in his immediate vicinity.

'There!' he told himself as he spotted the stairs leading to the fifteenth floor. His target was near. He hurried to the blast secure titanium reinforced door, and inserted Gustavus into the keypad at its left side. The screen blinked green, he retrieved the AI, and hurried in, readying his MA5K Carbine. He immediately halted. He did not expect what was before him.

"Holster your weapon, or the men die." A man with a grayish beard, dark eyes and a weary face dressed in a gray uniform, full of military medals and ribbons ordered him. In his hand he held a UNSC built M6A magnum, pointing it at the former commanding officer and crewmen of the UNSC Stock & Supply. Surrounding them was a large number of Insurrectionists, all dressed in their trademark gray uniforms, holding assault rifles. The Spartan made no move to surrender.

"Don't listen to him Sir, they've-" One of the crewmen began, but was abruptly cut off by a kick to his jaw. They all looked battered. The crewman being kicked, worse. The old man, the commanding officer the Spartan assumed, shot the crewman who had opened his mouth. The Spartan raised his rifle, pointing it at him.

"My name is Colonel Hawkings of the URF, and we will not surrender to the imperialist pigs that the UNSC are. We knew your leaders would try something. The nuke is too damn valuable. And your little explosion proved us right. Holster your weapon, and no one else needs to die." He said. As to make his point clear he tucked the magnum closer to the commanding officer's forehead. Sweat from the forehead dropped down on the pipe of the weapon.

"Where is the nuke?" The Spartan asked, perfectly calm.

"Not here. Irrelevant. Drop your weapon. I will count down from ten, and then the dying starts." The colonel said as he began counting down.

"The one who tells me where the nuke is gets to live." The Spartan proposed. The soldiers calmly chuckled amongst themselves. Some, the more nervous of the lot, began to look around. They weren't so sure of their comrades abilities as they were of the Spartan's, it seemed. The colonel quickly observed this.

"The one who tells him where the nuke is, dies!" he shouted at his men as he turned his head towards them. They were all suddenly distracted by their officer's threat, and the Spartan grasped the

moment. With lightning quick reflexes he brought up his MA5K Carbine and shot the colonel, first in the hand holding the magnum, forcing him to drop it, and then in the head. He fell down dead as the Spartan altered his aim and began spraying the Insurrectionist soldiers lined up before him. Seven more quickly fell, while some, perhaps better trained, responded to the sudden change of events. They began firing back, and one grabbed one of the crewmembers in order to use as a human shield. His crewmate quickly reacted and pushed the soldier away, only to get shot at point blank. The Spartan had dropped five more, and began moving into the fray as bullets pinged off of his armor. He motioned for the unharmed crewmembers to move behind him. They quickly obeyed his order.

"Where is the nuke!?" He shouted at one of them, difficult to hear over the firefight.

"We saw them taking it down the elevator ten minutes ago. We heard them talking about the docking bay!" The crewmember shouted back. The Spartan quickly made out a plan with the information at hand.

"Listen, directly opposite of the tower entrance, at the far end of the city, is a large facility where they recycle their waste. Get there, it's safe! Now!" He said as he gave his magnum to the man. The man nodded and ran away. The Spartan let loose a few more rounds to create an opening and give himself some time to think. He covered behind a pillar and looked around the room, careful to spot something that could help him get out of the room, and get the Shiva.

The Insurrectionists had spread out at the other half of the large room, effectively cutting him off from getting to one side or the other without at least one bullet penetrating his armor. The MJOLNIR could take as much. He took in the scene. _'There'. _He found a way. He pulled out a grenade, primed it, and tossed it to one group of soldiers, and he made a dash for the large reinforced windows covering a part of the wall. The soldiers tried to get away, but one was killed immediately by the fragmentation. The Spartan leaped, unleashing bullets on the window, and crashed through it, falling towards the ground.

He saw the truck only had halfway to the bay to go.

He broke the street where he landed, and immediately set off in a full sprint, hoping to gain on the truck. If only it were so easy. His comms activated as he was being hailed.

"Spartan, I need a progress report. Have you secured the objective?" Commander Stone asked in a stern voice.

"Negative ma'am, the objective is currently on it's way towards the docking bay. I'm pursuing. Secondary objective is currently safe, but have suffered casualties." Six responded, trying not to break speed.

"I'm putting my hopes to you on this one spartan. Get it done, in any way possible. I expect this mission to be a success, do you hear?" Commander Stone said, anger sipping through.

"Acknowledged, ma'am. Sierra B-312 out." He said as he deactivated his comms, his mind focused on the objective.

****Sergeant Rushmore, 105th Helljumpers****

The door activated as the ODS'Ts remained in cover. Out came battered and bruised men in gray jumpsuits. Their nametags was displayed on their right side of their chests, underneath the tag they could recognize anywhere. _'UNSC Navy'. _Sergeant Rushmore rose from his position, still keeping the missing crewmembers in his sights. The other ODS'Ts quickly followed. The crewmen's faces were full of surprise and shock, but they quickly smiled to one another, embracing each other and congratulating themselves. They had made it. The Sergeant had made his way over to the group to retrieve some information.

"As you're here, I assume the spartan freed you. I expected a higher number. Where is he now?" The Sergeant asked eagerly. Unconventionally for a ODS'T, he actually wished the spartan to be unharmed.

"Sir, am I glad to see you guys. They had beaten us for what feels like days. Not many of us made it.." The crewmember turned his gaze to the floor before he continued. "I don't know about the spartan. I think he's going after the nuclear bomb, on it's way to the docking bay. He covered us in a large firefight. If he's not dead, he must be near the bay. Sir."

The Sergeant contemplated the information he had received. He had told the spartan to hail them if he ran into trouble, which he obviously had ignored. And now he was on his way to the most heavily guarded area in the city, and the Innies knew where he was heading. He tried to reach the Spartan on the comms, but there was only static. The Sergeant decided on what to do.

****Lieutenant of the Navy, Spartan B-312****

He shot the soldier through the throat, as he moved to cover while he quickly aimed at the next target. He had expected resistance. But not this heavy. It felt like the entire rebel army had gathered at the docking bay to defend the stolen nuke. The stolen nuke, in turn, had been mounted on top of a rocket. Gustavus had given him a full report of the rocket. It was not as advanced as it seemed. It did have one object of interest, though. A slipspace drive. They could send the rocket anywhere in UNSC space, with the help of their insiders, and decimate an entire city. And the spartan wasn't about to let it happen. But right now, he couldn't reach it. The wall of lead kept him well away from it, not being able to insert Gustavus into a port, and disable the firing sequence. One of the rebels had gotten lucky, as well. A bullet had penetrated his radiotransmitter. The spartan hadn't even noticed it, yet. Two thumps was suddenly heard, and two explosions rocked the low catwalk where some rebels had taken up firing position. Rebels were dying from being fired upon in the flank, and it was not from his bullets. He looked towards where the bullets were coming from, and saw three black armored ODS'Ts, firing full auto. The Spartan's HUD quickly identified them as Smith, Jacobi and Sergeant Rushmore. The Sergeant quickly made his way over to his position.

"Couldn't let you have all the fun, Lieutenant." The Sergeant said as he depolarized his visor, revealing a smirk.

"Nice of you to join, Sergeant." The Spartan cheerfully said. He thought how strange it was, that under life threatening situations, people could be in such a good mood. The good mood, was not going to last, though, as a certain synthetic voice spoke up.

"Lieutenant, I have detected activity from inside the rocket. It is launching. I advice moving to another position. I am providing a countdown timer. Lieutenant?" Gustavus notified. He heard a cry nearby, and saw Jacobi struggle to stand as a round hit him in the side. He was quickly aided by Smith, who kept firing from his hip. Jacobi started patching his wound.

The Spartan was speechless. Never had he failed a mission. And he was not going to start now. Not even from a situation like this. He knew what he had to do.

"Sergeant, I will hold the bay! Get your men out of here!"

"But you need help, Si-"

"Sergeant, this is a direct order. Go!"

The Sergeant stared at the Spartan's visor as if he could pierce the titanium-glass webbing and see his crystal blue eyes. He couldn't, but he could feel them. And what he felt was determination. He hesitated, and then he turned away from the Spartan, issuing a command to Smith to pick up the wounded heavy weapons specialist, Jacobi, and move out to the Pelican. The Spartan could hear a low muttering over the sound of the firefight. "Good luck Spartan."

He shut his eyes and turned away when he was certain the ODST's had retreated, facing the rocket. He gazed upon the countdown ticking down. It was only thirty seconds left until the rocket would launch.

"Gustavus, I will need your help for what I'm about to do."

"Certainly, Lieutenant. I believe I know what you're about to attempt, and may I say: You're absolutely mad." The Spartan chuckled.

The countdown hit zero. He immediately acted. He utilized Gustavus' fragmented power, connected it with his MJOLNIR armour, ordered calculations to be made, and then the rocket fired. With an impressive acceleration, the rocket tore it's way through the launching bay, and the rebels behind, those not incinerated by the rear-blast, fired their remaining bullets at the Spartan. The rocket was dangerously close, the distance closing incredibly fast, and at the last second, with the help of Gustavus, he grapped the tail of the rocket, holding on to it as it breached the asteroid base, into the deep void of space. He could see the asteroid becoming smaller and smaller by every second. He saw the cannons and missile batteries aligning themselves towards his position, but didn't dare to fire as he hung on to the rocket. It felt like his shoulder was going to fall off. It didn't matter to him, as long as he disabled it. He knew the risks. He knew what he had to do. He had to achieve the impossible.

****Onboard the UNSC Prowler_ The Dark Knight_****

"Ma'am, I'm detecting activity at the hangar bay. It looks like some sort of ballistic missile has been fired. Scans indicate a Slipspace device mounted, as well as highly advanced guidance systems. I'm also detecting.. uh, this can't be right." The ensign looked up towards the Commander with a nervous look to his face.

Commander Stone shot him a piercing glance and urged him to continue.

"Uh, ma'am, it looks like some sort of humanoid form at the rear fin of the rocket.." the ensign finished.

Commander Stone looked down towards the panel which she leaned upon, and then she raised her head, and smiled.

****Lieutenant of the Navy, Spartan B-312****

He tore through the metal exterior with his fists, as he made his way to the control panel located at the top of the large rocket. He worked fast, knowing that any second it could jump into Slipspace. The rebels had sent a small spaceship to follow the rocket on it's journey, probably to issue the initiation command.

The Spartan reached the panel, tore it open, and immediately found a slot in which to insert Gustavus. He inserted the AI, and hoped for the best.

"Lieutenant, I cannot deactivate the firing sequence with my limited power. I can, however, set it to detonate on your command. How shall I proceed.?" Gustavus notified. The Spartan thought about it, and knew that it would be the best choice they had. He only hoped he would be out of the blast range.

"Do it." He ordered. The AI immediately notified him that it had been done. The Spartan braced himself, and let go of the rocket, hovering through space. He activated his thruster pack to move away in a better angle. The rebel spaceship still followed the rocket, not noticing the spartan had jumped off. And when the rocket had moved to a satisfying distance, he commanded the AI to detonate it. A massive ball of fire engulfed his field of vision, as the spaceship was swallowed whole. Debris soon follow and flew around him.

He soon began speaking into his comms; "UNSC _The Dark Knight, this is Sierra Bravo-Three-One-Two, please respond." _No response._ "_UNSC _The Dark Knight, this is Sierra Bravo-Three-One-Two, Priority Objective accomplished, requesting pick-up, over."_

****August 18, 2547****

****Location: Onboard the UNSC Prowler _The Dark Knight_****

****03:17, Standard Earth Time****

"I congratulate you on a successfull mission, Lieutenant. A good number of civilians owe you their lives, and they don't even know it." Commander Stone said as she met him in the prowler's airdock, ever accompanied by the old colonel.

"Thank you, but I didn't do it alone." The Spartan said, as he looked

towards the ODSTs and the crewmen being attended by medical staff.

"Indeed, Spartan. I will personally let Colonel Holland know what you did here, and rest assured, this will not go unnoticed. It was a pleasure working with you." She reached out her hand, and the Spartan grabbed it. Sergeant Rushmore approached.

"Lieutenant, I have to say, you're all right, for a spartan. It was a pleasure." He said as he reached out his hands, which the Spartan shook.

"I'll see you around, Sergeant." And with those words, he went to get some sleep.

****Flashback End.****

End
file.